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William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*: Orientalism and the Continuation of the English Oratorio

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Elissa Hope Keck entitled "William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*: Orientalism and the Continuation of the English Oratorio." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music, with a major in Music.

Nasser Al-Taee, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Rachel M. Golden, Angela L. Batey

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*:

Orientalism and the Continuation of the English Oratorio

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Music

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Elissa Hope Keck

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Abstract

This study investigates aspects of Orientalism found within the genre of the English oratorio, specifically William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931). Building on Edward Said's research on Orientalism, analyses of Orientalist representations in music exploded the field of musicology in the 1980s and 90s. However, the examination of Orientalism in sacred genres remains lacking. Bringing forth cultural, political, and musical conflicts between East and West, Walton's oratorio encourages further investigation in previously unaddressed genres. I argue that, by combining dramatic operatic elements with sacred text, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* reflects a continuation of Orientalist ideologies through binary opposition aimed at perpetuating the predominantly negative stereotypes of the Middle East and its people while celebrating the superiority of Western culture.

Examining political, social, cultural, and musical contexts for Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* in England between the wars, I draw on eighteenth through twentieth-century Western compositions, including opera and symphonic repertory, that appropriate the Orient in similar ways. Close examination of Walton's oratorio reflects his adherence to standard tonal, harmonic, and orchestral signifiers that differentiate between East and West as established and canonized by Orientalist composers before him. Furthermore, I argue that Walton's exposure to Orientalist works from an early age, as well as rising nationalistic sentiments in interwar England, shaped his conception of the Orient as a place of violence, savagery, and barbarity while promoting the West, represented by the Israelites in *Belshazzar's Feast*, as rational, monotheistic, and civilized.

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Chapter I

Introduction: The Problem of Orientalism

William Walton's first large choral work, *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931), brings forth cultural, political, and musical conflicts between East and West that remain unaddressed by musicologists. Through its structure and text, the composition combines traditional oratorio elements with dramatic operatic characteristics, including exotic settings of the biblical East.[1] Orientalism had been explored within secular genres, especially opera, prior to *Belshazzar's Feast.* By combining dramatic operatic elements with a sacred text, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* reflects a continuation of Orientalist ideologies through binary opposition aimed at perpetuating the predominantly negative stereotypes of the Middle East while celebrating the superiority of Western culture. As a result, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* opens the door for a new investigation of Orientalism in sacred genres.[2]

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) initiated serious investigations of the topic in literary theory, sociology, and related disciplines.[3] Since then, however, Orientalism remains highly polemical and contested. Grounding my research in recent interdisciplinary scholarship, I demonstrate how Orientalism reaches beyond secular compositions to saturate biblically inspired works such as the English oratorio. To this end, I illustrate the pervasive and discursive nature of Orientalism in music. I argue that by Orientalizing the words of scripture through music, Walton paints the stereotypes of

[1] See Stewart R. Craggs, *William Walton: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[2] As an exception, Ralph Locke offers a discussion of Handel's oratorio *Belshazzar* in his recent book *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 90-94. Although he addresses exoticism within the work, he does not address the religious aspects.

[3] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 31-48.

East and West onto the pagan Babylonians and the captive Israelites (respectively) to create a uniquely Orientalized English oratorio. Orientalism's existence in European culture, and its role in musical representation, serve as inspirations for nationalism in Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast.* Incorporating historical Orientalist views of the East as well as previously recognized musical depictions of Orientalism, Walton creates an English oratorio that reflects England's perception of Middle Eastern culture in the 1930s.

In the case of *Belshazzar's Feast,* Walton's close connection to the theater as well as his desire to promote English music led him to imbue the work with Orientalist characteristics. I contend that Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* extends into English oratorio the rampant operatic Orientalist representations that stage and ridicule the Orient while celebrating Western superiority. Using verbatim scripture as its text (with a few additions by Osbert Sitwell), *Belshazzar's Feast* also continues the tradition of the English oratorio established by Handel.[4] The characteristics that define the English oratorio genre include heavy reliance on chorus rather than solo for the action, a typical formal division into three sections or acts, and a scripture-based text.[5]

Controversy exists in the genre categorization of *Belshazzar's Feast.* Some, including Neil Tierney and Byron Adams, argue that it is a dramatic cantata rather than an English oratorio.[6] However, Colin Timms states, the term cantata "has been applied, somewhat haphazardly, to a wide variety of works which generally have in common only

[4] Ben Finane, *Handel's* Messiah *and His English Oratorios* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 26.

[5] See Kurt Pahlen, *The World of the Oratorio* (Portland: Amadeus, 1990), 136 and Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio,* vol. 4, *The Oratorio in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 178.

[6] Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Robert Hale, 1984), 225 and Byron Adams, "Walton, William," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40016 (accessed October 14, 2009).

that they are for chorus and orchestra."[7] Byron and Tierney label *Belshazzar's Feast* as a cantata without offering any discussion or analysis of form that leads to such a conclusion. I agree with scholars such as Robert Matthew-Walker and Howard Smither that the structure of *Belshazzar's Feast*, through its use of chorus and verbatim scripture from Daniel 5, follows and continues Handel's tradition of the English oratorio.[8] The similarities between these aspects of *Belshazzar's Feast* and the defining characteristics of the English oratorio (discussed in Chapter II) dispute the categorization of the work as a cantata. *Belshazzar's Feast*'s association with the English oratorio explains and solidifies the work's nationalistic themes in that the English oratorio was developed to represent a distinctively English musical style.

Complicating the issue of representation in Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* is his portrayal of the Israelites as Western and the Babylonians as Oriental. Geographically, both the Babylonians and the Israelites represent the East. However, Walton assigns Western values and characteristics to the Israelites, including monotheism, a civilized nature, and superiority. At the same time he depicts the Babylonians as savage, violent, and uncivilized. Similarly, in Camille Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (1877), the Israelites represent the West when compared to the Babylonians. In *Samson*, the Western portrayal of the Hebrews occurs through monotheism, a civilized nature and an uncontrolled fascination with the exotic Eastern female; contrastingly, the Philistines are Eastern and pagan.[9]

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[7] Colin Timms, et al. "Cantata," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04748 (accessed November 3, 2009).

[8] Robert Matthew-Walker, "Aspects of Walton's Second Symphony," *Tempo* 221 (2002): 29 and Smither, *Oratorio in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 175.

[9] Ralph Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other:' Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila,*" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 3 (1991): 262-263.

Differences and misunderstandings between Islam and Christianity are displayed in *Belshazzar's Feast* in the depictions of the Israelites and the Babylonians. While Judaism and paganism are the religions represented in the biblical account of the story, Walton represents the Israelites as Western, allowing his audience to recognize them as Christian. The Babylonians, meanwhile, exude the violent, barbaric, and savage Oriental stereotypes of Islam.

Walton's representation of the Israelites stems largely from historical English thought regarding Western supremacy. Such views allowed the West to appoint themselves as God's new chosen people—the new Israelites. Addressing the widespread view of religion in Elizabethan England, Michael McGiffert states, "It was…a simple matter of fact—that the Deity's great mercies shown towards us Englishmen…are because we are like unto the children of Israel."[10] England's identification with the Israelites results from the recognition of similarities between the two cultures.[11] The English self-appointed position of God's new chosen people pervaded English thought throughout the twentieth century and is illustrated in Walton's portrayal of the Israelites in *Belshazzar's Feast.*

Belshazzar's Feast serves as an icon of Englishness through its genre, commission, and premiere. Originally commissioned by the BBC, *Belshazzar's Feast* quickly outgrew the guidelines for broadcast in the 1920s. The size of the orchestra and choir, as well as the addition of two brass bands, proved too massive for the

[10] Michael McGiffert, "God's Controversy with Jacobean England," *The American Historical Review* 88, no. 5 (1983): 1152.

[11] Ibid.

accommodations provided by the BBC.[12] Thus, it was first performed at the Leeds Festival in 1931, which aimed to support and encourage English composers such as Edward Elgar (1857-1934), Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958), and Gustav Holst (1874-1934), by providing opportunities for premieres of their works.[13]

Walton's involvement with the Leeds Festival, his desire to promote English music through the English oratorio, and his composition of morale-boosting music for war films confirm his pride in his English identity and convey his encouragement of English nationalism. Inspired by strong nationalistic sentiments and colonialist attitudes, Walton's compositions were intended to elevate levels of patriotism and morale during World War II. Walton's film scores for *The Next of Kin* (1941) and *The First of the Few* (1942) exemplify this agenda.[14] In this vein, Walton was commissioned to compose *Crown Imperial* for the 1937 coronation of King George VI and *Orb and Sceptre* for Elizabeth II in 1953, further highlighting his patriotism and national pride.[15]

Belshazzar's Feast directly results from Walton's English identity and nationalism. Understanding the association his society held with the Israelites as God's chosen people, Walton promoted ideas of superiority in ways easily recognized by his audience. Further, the composition's adoption of English oratorio conventions continues a legacy of patriotism, as demonstrated by Walton's Orientalist musical strategies.

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[12] See Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 53 and Tierney, *William Walton*, 63-65.

[13] "Leeds Festival," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev., ed. Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e5976 (accessed May 29, 2009).

[14] Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, 113.

[15] Susanna Walton, *Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 72.

Orientalism in Historical Context

To contextualize my assessment of *Belshazzar's Feast,* I examine Said's notion of Orientalism. Said explains Orientalism's function within European culture as a discipline, as a reflection of cultural identity, and in terms of its intention to defame the Orient.

Orientalism as a discipline treats and studies signifiers delineating Western appropriation of Oriental cultures. This discipline is framed by political and colonialist agendas and stimulated by military campaigns and Western knowledge of the Orient. Said understands Orientalism as a web of ideologies reflecting Western identity as a mirror image of what is inferior, alien, and uncivilized.[16]

Despite the vast geographical area and varied cultural history of the Middle East, Said argues that Western European Orientalist scholars have depicted it and its people within a narrow and unified set of indices formulated to facilitate European colonialist missions. In the process, Orientalists have misrepresented the Orient according to their own desires and misunderstandings rather than its reality. To this end, Rana Kabbani argues that the mental barrier between the Occident and the Orient has been fueled by ignorance and the perpetuation of mythical and fantastic visions of the Orient. She states that the "West perceived the East as a dangerous region, where Islam flourished and monstrous races multiplied and thrived."[17] She further demonstrates that English literary compositions essentially served as vehicles of propaganda to promote English nationalism.[18]

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[16] See Said, *Orientalism*, 45-46.
[17] Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1986), 14.
[18] Ibid., 15.

Said's notion of Orientalism systematically criticizes European representations of the East, including the West's desire to dominate the Orient through study. Orientalism as a discipline, according to Said, "is knowledge of the Orient that places things Oriental in class, court, prison, or manual for scrutiny, study, judgment, discipline, or governing."[19] As a result, the West's study and judgment of the East has led to distorted interpretations and stereotypes of Eastern culture to be accepted as reality and fact.

Written accounts of Oriental travels have allowed the West to define its own identity through comparison with and differentiation from the East. The Western understanding of the East often manifests false portrayals of the Orient through travel writings. Marina Tolmacheva notes that the field of Orientalism "has long had a strong awareness of travels and exploration."[20] The descriptions of the Orient in travel logs reveal a fascination with exoticism in Western writers' accounts of Eastern culture.[21] Also, these travel writings have encouraged the Western perception of Eastern stereotype to be recognized as fact. Said states that knowledge of the East "is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge."[22]

Issues of identity serve as a main component of Orientalism. The West defines itself, according to Orientalist theory, along binary oppositions of knowledge and power (West vs. East, Occident vs. Orient, civilized vs. barbaric). The East represents violence and inferiority; therefore, the West symbolizes a civilized, peaceful, and superior society.

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[19] Said, *Orientalism*, 41.

[20] Marina Tolmacheva, "The Medieval Arabic Geographer and the Beginnings of Modern Orientalism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 2 (1995): 141.

[21] See Said, *Orientalism*, 58 and Derek Gregory, "Between the Book and the Lamp: Imaginative Geographies of Egypt, 1849-50," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, no. 1 (1995): 29-57.

[22] Said, *Orientalism*, 36.

Drawing on Said's discussion of identity, Wang Ning claims that the logical theorizing of Orientalism "is not that of the Orient, but that of its opposite side. The Orient is simply that which exists in the eyes of certain Western people."[23] Western-constructed Orientalism has caused the East to serve as a reflection of and in opposition to Western identity.[24]

The offensive and inaccurate representations of foreign cultures in Orientalism found a home, one all too comfortable, on the operatic stages of Western Europe from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. In some instances, as seen in Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, these degrading interpretations were located in dramatic works that employed scriptural foundations or biblically inspired texts presented through a Western bias. Misinterpretations of the tenets of Islam and Christianity resulted from a failure to desire and acknowledge fact over fantasy, and these religious misunderstandings served as a model for religious representation within Orientalism.

The implication of misrepresentation, identity, and stereotype in Western music occurs through musical themes, instrumentation, and tonality. Melodic line, rhythm, and text all function as tools conveying the stereotypes of race, gender, and culture. Further, skewed usages of Oriental musics highlight the violence and sensuality of the Orient, falsely conveying the musical characteristics of the culture. Although a Western composer may intently study the music of the culture in question, he remains vulnerable

[23] Wang Ning, "Orientalism versus Occidentalism?" *New Literary History* 28, no. 1 (1997): 58.
[24] Ibid. See also Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002): 768-769.

to alterations because his music is an interpretation intended to convey another culture through a Western lens.[25]

Operatic works from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries function as one of the primary venues for Orientalist representation in music.[26] The West's fascination with the exotic East provided a popular theme for theatrical production, including text, plot, costumes, and music. Similar musical representations of Orientalism are found throughout *Belshazzar's Feast* and highlighted in my analysis of this English oratorio in Chapter IV.

Eighteenth-century operatic plots focused on portraying the East as violent and masculine through militaristic musical style. Mozart's use of the *alla turca* style, which inaccurately portrayed Turkish music, in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* is the most recognized of this time.[27] Also used in *Die Zauberflöte,* Mozart's strategies of employing the *alla turca* style set the standard for musical misrepresentation. This style depicted Oriental characters through certain Orientalist musical signifiers including the use of major tonality (C, D, F, and B-flat), piccolo, bass drum, duple meter, heavy down beats, and chromaticism. The efforts behind *alla turca* did not aim to create authentic Turkish music.[28] It is not a "real" Eastern style; rather it functions as an invented style meant to emulate and mimic Turkish music. Nicholas Cook states, "There is no suggestion, that when they heard Mozart's Orientalisms, the Viennese thought they were hearing real

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[25] See Jonathan Bellman, ed., *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), xii.

[26]See Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other:'" 261 and Ralph Locke, "Reflections on Orientalism in Opera and Musical Theatre," *Opera Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1993): 54.

[27] Nasser Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient in Western Music: Violence and Sensuality* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), forthcoming.

[28] Michael Pirker, "Janissary music," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/14133 (accessed March 22, 2010).

Turkish music."[29] Rather, it evoked a sense of "Turkishness" as Mozart perceived it to be.

Stimulated by European colonialism and imperialist desires for control, nineteenth-century opera represented the Orient as sensual, feminine, and seductive through the Western male fantasy of the exotic Eastern female. In a typical scenario, a Western male hero ventures into Oriental terrain and falls in love with a seductive Oriental female. As violence surrounds her, his involvement with her eventually leads to his doom and destruction. Orientalist operatic plots of the nineteenth century reveal a fantasy of the East by transporting the Western audience to an Oriental land and portraying Eastern women as overly sensual with heightened, uncontrollable libidos. Thus Ralph Locke summarizes the Orientalist plot: "A western male becomes romantically involved with a local female who is portrayed as sexually inviting and thereby at once attractive and threatening."[30] Georges Bizet's *Carmen* (1875), Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (1877), and Léo Delibes' *Lakmé* (1883) all exemplify this nineteenth-century Orientalist storyline.[31] In all three operas the leading female suffers a brutally violent death in order to restore European ideology, allowing the West to reclaim power and control.[32]

In the twentieth century, Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904) continues the theme of the Western soldier and the exotic. As in the nineteenth-century Orientalist

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[29] Nicholas Cook, "Encountering the Other, Redefining the Self: Hindostannie Airs, Haydn's Folksong Settings and the 'Common Practice' Style," in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s-1940s,* eds. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 24.

[30] Ralph Locke, "Orientalism," in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusicoline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40604 (accessed May 1, 2009).

[31] James Parakilas, "The Soldier and the Exotic: Operatic Variations on a Theme of Racial Encounter, Part I," *The Opera Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1993): 33-56.

[32] See Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet,* Carmen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 29-41.

plot, the twentieth-century Oriental female suffers a similar fate.[33] This stream of continuous operatic representations established Orientalism in the twentieth century as a prominent fixture in Western music and paved the way for its use in instrumental and sacred genres.

A Review of the Literature

Scholarly publications on Orientalism in the English oratorio are scarce. Few musicologists examine cultural misrepresentation within this particular genre. Though Ralph Locke's analysis of Handel's *Belshazzar* highlights the barbaric representation of the pagan Babylonians through the drunkenness and violence of King Belshazzar, he neglects to highlight the religious representation of the Israelites and Babylonians.[34] On the other hand, Ruth Smith's work provides an abundance of information on Handel and his oratorios.[35] Her research on various "Jewish" instruments that Handel employed in *Saul* begins to identify themes of cultural representation through instrumentation, providing insight into the earliest occurrence of cultural misrepresentation within this genre.[36] Like Locke, however, she fails to engage with the meanings of these cultural representations. Howard Smither's work provides a broader assessment and description of the genre's form, performances and text, outlining the English oratorio's birth and

[33] For more information on twentieth-century Orientalist operatic plots see Parakilas, "The Soldier and the Exotic," 33-56 and James Parakilas, "The Soldier and the Exotic: Operatic Variations on a Theme of Racial Encounter, Part II," *The Opera Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1993): 43-69.

[34] See Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 90-94.

[35] Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[36] See Ruth Smith, "Early Music's Dramatic Significance in Handel's *Saul*," *Early Music* 35, no. 2 (2007): 173-189.

development; but his research does not address Orientalism.[37] I draw from and add to the research of these scholars in my assessment of Orientalist representation in *Belshazzar's Feast.*

In order to establish Orientalism's position in specific musical works and musicology as a discipline, I evaluate the varying points of view of Jonathan Bellman, Mary Hunter, Ralph Locke, Susan McClary, and Matthew Head.

Bellman views Orientalism as a means to heighten drama, acknowledging that Orientalism exists, but arguing that its intention is to entertain—not to offend. Bellman's acceptance of Orientalism as a source of entertainment is made clear as he states:

> Exoticism is not about the earnest study of foreign cultures; it is about drama, effect, and evocation. The listener is intrigued, hears something new and savory, but is not aurally destabilized enough to feel uncomfortable.[38]

Bellman's position serves as an excuse to continue the defamation of the East through musical stereotypes. Labeling Orientalism in music as "drama" and entertainment defends its existence without acknowledging its inaccuracies and misrepresentations. The failure to take Orientalist portrayals seriously has allowed Orientalism to flourish in musical works. The negative representation of the East through dramatic devices continues in Walton's conveying of the Eastern Babylonians in *Belshazzar's Feast*.

Arguing that Orientalist representation functions as an offensive imitation of the East, Hunter's work with the *alla turca* style in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* offers a more serious investigation of the ramifications of stereotype. She claims that

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[37] See Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, vol. 2, *The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Protestant Germany and England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 348-350.

[38] Bellman, *The Exotic in Western Music*, xii.

Osmin, the Othered character in the opera, provides comedy through his uncontrolled anger and violence, which represent his Easternness.[39] Osmin's character exudes serious moral flaws through his eagerness to punish, willingness to disobey his religious commitment to sobriety, and violence towards others.

Building on Said's *Orientalism,* musicologists have recently begun to engage with the topic more critically. Locke recognizes the defamation of the East through Orientalism and argues that drama is not a valid motivation for such misrepresentation.[40] Fully acknowledging the issues of race, gender, and religion in Orientalism through his work with Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (discussed later in Chapter II), Locke exposes in great detail the Western view of Eastern religion through the portrayal of the pagan Philistines, particularly in the "Bacchanal" and the "Dance of the Priestesses of Dagon." Locke's close evaluation of the text, plot, and music boldly establishes this opera as a work laced with Orientalism.

Drawing on Said's position regarding power relations, McClary incorporates interdisciplinary works by Sander Gilman and Reina Lewis regarding race, class, and gender in the nineteenth century.[41] Her assessment of Bizet's *Carmen* highlights the stereotypical Western views of exotic women and their encounter with Western males.[42]

Reflecting on the scope of Orientalism within musicology, Matthew Head warns of musicologists' approaches that view Orientalism as unproblematic. He argues that

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[39] Mary Hunter, "*Alla Turca* Style," 58.

[40] Susan McClary, "Structures of Identity and Difference in Bizet's *Carmen*," in *Reading Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 166.

[41] See Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). See also Sander Gilman, "The Theory of the Black in German Aesthetic Theory," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8, no. 4 (1975): 373-391 and Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1-15.

[42] See McClary, *Georges Bizet,* Carmen, 29-31 and McClary, "Structures of Identity and Difference in Bizet's *Carmen*,"166.

most scholars tend to describe and outline the characteristics of exotic styles without engaging with them culturally and politically. He describes these attempts as "musicology on safari," arguing that Orientalism has been acknowledged and categorized but not addressed on a critical level.[43] Further, Head acknowledges the tragic events of 9/11 as contributing to the lack of serious investigation into Orientalist representations.

Indeed, musicologists have often only recognized Orientalism's existence in music without truly acknowledging the severity of the resulting offenses cast upon the exploited cultures. The existence of the defamation of the East in scripturally-texted musical works reveals the West's absorption of Orientalism and remains evident in Walton's musical treatment of verbatim scripture in *Belshazzar's Feast.*

Several Walton biographers, including Michael Kennedy, Susanna Walton, and Neil Tierney, confirm Walton's Orientalist influences by discussing his presence at the performances of Orientalist works by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Puccini, and Igor Stravinsky. In addition, they provide information regarding his friendship with and patronage by the Sitwell family and information regarding Osbert Sitwell's text additions for *Belshazzar's Feast*, all of which I discuss in Chapter III.[44]

Methodology and Scope of Research

This study situates Orientalism in the field of musicology by investigating its existence in secular operas with biblical or religious themes and within the sacred realm of the English oratorio through *Belshazzar's Feast.* My analysis of *Belshazzar's Feast* as

[43] Matthew Head, "Musicology on Safari: Orientalism and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory," *Music Analysis* 22 (2003): 211-230.

[44] See Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, 37-47 and Walton, *Behind the Façade*, 46-57. See also Tierney, *William Walton*, 29.

an English oratorio highlights the sacred aspects of the work through its use of biblical text. This scripturally-based work possesses the same Orientalist characteristics and musical illustrations of the East as do its secular counterparts in opera. My study expands the field of musicology by questioning its assessment of Orientalism in a genre previously overlooked.

To affirm the close association between Orientalism and religious misrepresentations, I investigate Orientalist representations of religion in Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (1877), Delibes' *Lakmé* (1883), and Strauss' *Salome* (1905). I rely on the themes of representation highlighted by Locke to account for Orientalist portrayals in religiously-themed operas. Although these operas are secular in genre, they convey Orientalist Western thought through the representations of Eastern religions.

Orientalist concepts of Western domination and superiority are demonstrated through the depiction of religion, and they parallel the Orientalist portrayal of the Eastern pagan Babylonians and Western Israelites in *Belshazzar's Feast.* In this vein, I evaluate the characterization of the Western Hebrews and Eastern pagan Philistines in Saint-Saëns' *Samson.* While *Samson* deals with biblical characters, the plot strays from the scriptural account of the story. Unlike *Samson,* Delibes' *Lakmé* is not based on a biblical story. However, religion serves as a main theme for Orientalist portrayal in this opera. I discuss the depiction and interpretation of the Eastern Hindu religion by the European travelers to showcase the disregard the West holds toward Eastern religions. Finally, I highlight the Orientalism found in Strauss' *Salome*, particularly in the deviation from the biblical account of the beheading of John the Baptist. I investigate religious themes in

these specific Orientalist works to demonstrate previous treatments of Orientalism and religion and how they inform Walton's work.

In addition to examining religiously-themed Orientalist operas, I reveal aspects of Orientalism in oratorios such as Handel's *Saul* (1738) and *Belshazzar* (1744), which serve as predecessors to Walton's Orientalist oratorio. These Handelian oratorios express themes of imperialism and English power and advancement as well as a pronounced sense of Western superiority.

To account for Walton's use of Orientalist signifiers in *Belshazzar's Feast*, I discuss his exposure to Orientalism through his cultural experience in England as well as his introduction to works such as *Le Coq d'or* (1907) by Rimsky-Korsakov, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904), and Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). I argue that the Orientalist elements found within these pieces served as examples for Walton's Orientalist strategies in *Belshazzar's Feast*.[45]

Finally, I rely on established musical Orientalist signifiers such as Orientalist tonality, instrumentation, and intervals in my analysis of *Belshazzar's Feast* to explain the roles of the chorus as representing both East and West.[46] In addition to the *alla turca* elements previously discussed, the use of double reed instruments, *glissandi,* odd meter, and chromaticism also convey the exoticism of the city of Babylon and the triumph of good over evil—West over East.[47] The use of Orientalist musical elements provides a clear account of Walton's illustration of the Babylonians as East and the Israelites as

[45] See Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, 8 and Walton, *Behind the Façade*, 44.
[46] Derek Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *The Musical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1998): 327.
[47] Ibid.

West. The Israelites' identity is defined by their faith in the Western God and their victory over the evil Babylonians.

The text of *Belshazzar's Feast* also contains Orientalist aspects. While the majority of the text stems from scripture (Psalm 81, Psalm 137, and Daniel 5), Osbert Sitwell added several sections that enhance the Orientalist representation. His description of the city of Babylon portrays the exoticism, sensuality, and violence of the stereotypical East.[48] The lamentation for the fall of Babylon also emphasizes Western views of the Eastern Babylonians in that the West laments losing the exotic fantasy of this city rather than its citizens' loss of life.[49]

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

In Chapter II, I define the English oratorio as a religiously-themed genre that incorporates operatic dramatic elements to provide a platform for the portrayal of Orientalism and investigate Orientalist themes in Handelian English oratorios. I focus on the early representations of imperialism, domination, and power in Handel's *Saul* and *Belshazzar.* The final section of this chapter examines operatic works with religious overtones and concludes that religion is not immune to Orientalist representation. These works combine musical Orientalist portrayal with religious themes; however, the level of defamation increases dramatically when such illustrations of the Orient are coupled with verbatim scripture in works such as *Belshazzar's Feast.*

Chapter III reveals William Walton's personal experience with Orientalist works, investigating their direct influence over his compositional techniques of portraying the

[48] William Walton, *Belshazzar's Feast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 28.
[49] Ibid., 118-132.

Eastern Babylonians with Oriental musical signifiers. The political state of England between the World Wars, as well as England's desire for colonial expansion, maintained Western views of imperialism and power in European culture. As a result, the interwar politics of England increased the influence of Walton's patriotic English identity on the Orientalist representations in *Belshazzar's Feast.*

In Chapter IV, I analyze Walton's musical representation of Orientalism in *Belshazzar's Feast* and investigate Osbert Sitwell's addition of text to the biblical story. Musical analysis advances our understanding of the cultural stereotypes present within this work by revealing the effects of Walton's abundant Orientalist influences.

My findings in the Conclusion confirm that *Belshazzar's Feast* continues the tradition of the Handelian English oratorio while accentuating Orientalist musical signifiers. Thus, my work corroborates Said's assessment that Orientalism will "last up to the present."[50] *Belshazzar's Feast* supports Said's claim in demonstrating the continuation of Orientalism's existence and providing a new venue for the investigation of Orientalist representation. My thesis concludes that Walton's introduction to Orientalism through his exposure to Orientalist musical works, as well as his English upbringing, directly influenced his compositional strategies in *Belshazzar's Feast.* Ingrained in the minds of Western artists, historians, and composers, Orientalism continues to pollute Western culture through misjudgments, appropriations, and false depictions of the East.

[50] Said, *Orientalism*, 44.

Chapter II

Orientalism on the Stage: The English Oratorio and Opera

The structural and textual similarities between the Handelian tradition and *Belshazzar's Feast* confidently situate Walton's composition as a continuation of the English oratorio. But, due to its biblical subject, Walton's oratorio perpetuates many of the problematic issues found in late-nineteenth-century Orientalist operas as it blatantly stereotypes the Babylonians as the Other. These misrepresentations in Walton's works reinforce Edward Said's argument that Orientalism is a theatrical representation motivated primarily by current religious and political events along binary oppositions.

In this chapter, I establish the continuity of Oriental appropriations by Western composers along binary lines and argue that Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* is an extension of established Handelian practices cemented by nineteenth-century models from both the sacred genre of the oratorio and the secular domain of opera.

Representation in Handel's Operas and Oratorios

It is generally accepted that Handel created the English oratorio while Haydn and Mendelssohn upheld the tradition during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Central to the genre's definition reside biblically-inspired texts, a general three-act structural division, a heavy reliance on chorus, and the use of solo singing.[1] The development and lifespan of this genre is appreciated and reborn through Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast.* Although the texts of oratorios derive from the Bible, religious tensions between Islam

[1] Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, vol. 4, *The Oratorio in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 178.

and Christianity, instigated by the Crusades, continue to shape and complicate our reception of oratorio in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Handel's Orientalist operas and oratorios from the mid-1700s reflect a Western view of the East that persists in Walton's twentieth-century version of the English oratorio. The manifestation of Handel's musical strategies in his operas *Giulio Cesare* (1724) and *Riccardo primo* (1727), as well as in his oratorios *Saul* (1738) and *Belshazzar* (1744), illustrate the contemporaneous Western views of the Orient.

Handel's vast operatic output during the 1720s is due in large part to the Royal Academy of Music. The remarkable amount of Orientalist operas produced by the Royal Academy of Music between 1724 and 1728 resulted from the involvement of its directors with international trade, particularly the East India Company.[2] Orientalist operas of the time reflect the desire for domination, status, and power over the East as explained by Ellen Harris:

> The notion of upholding English interests in East India trade by supporting an Italian art form, set in the Orient…may not be as contradictory as it seems. The directors not only wanted to see London unrivaled in international trade, but also considered the development of a first-class opera, musical values aside, a symbol of their status.[3]

The desire for success in an operatic high art form stems from the British aspiration to excel politically, culturally, and economically. This ambition provided the operas

[2] Ellen T. Harris, "With Eyes on the East and Ears in the West: Handel's Orientalist Operas," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 36, no. 3 (2006): 420.

[3] Ibid., 423.

produced by the Royal Academy with an Orientalist plot containing themes of Western superiority necessary for Orientalist representation.

Handel's *Giulio Cesare* (1724) combines political encounters and a love story in a plot centered on Julius Caesar's military expedition to Egypt and his love affair with Cleopatra. Although the opera employs historical characters, the fictional story concerns the West's desire of the Orient's exotic sensuality.[4] The opera opens with Caesar's arrival in Egypt. Ptolemy and Cleopatra, the co-rulers of the country, amuse Caesar with their sibling rivalry. Ptolemy demonstrates the Western views of the Orient's violence and barbarity by giving Caesar the detached head of his adversary, Pompey. Meanwhile, Cleopatra fuels the Western desire for the exotic female through her seduction of Caesar in hopes of promoting herself as the sole ruler of Egypt.

The seduction scene in Act 2 highlights the Orient as feminine, sensual, and exotic. The act opens with Caesar's led entrance into a lush garden facing the Palace of Pleasure on Mount Parnassus. Cleopatra, disguised as Virtue and accompanied by nine maidens, descends on the throne of Parnassus as Caesar watches from afar. Unable to resist the seductive powers of Cleopatra's *da capo* aria, "V'adoro pupille," Caesar interrupts her twice, thus revealing his inability to ignore the enticing spectacle before him.[5] In his examination of this scene, Nasser Al-Taee notes, "The aria's slow tempo and dotted rhythm…enrich its seductive power."[6] The orchestra is divided into nine parts

[4] Anthony Hicks, "*Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (ii)," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O004424 (accessed May 21, 2010).

[5] George Frederic Handel, *Giulio Cesare* (New York: International Music, 1973).

[6] Nasser Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient in Western Music: Violence and Sensuality* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), forthcoming.

with continuo to highlight Cleopatra and the nine maidens. Descending leaps from dominant to tonic reveals vulnerability and excessive force.[7]

Contrasting Cleopatra's seductive, interrupted aria, Caesar's arias remain tonal and never stray from the Western *da capo* form. "Va tacito e nascoto" in Act 1 and "Al lampo dell' armi" from the third scene in Act 2 employ virtuosic melismatic passages in *da capo* form, opposing Cleopatra's slow, enticing, disrupted aria. Through his close connection to Western musical forms and strategies, Caesar embodies the Western characteristics of courage and bravery.[8]

Moreover, Caesar represents the West through his valiant and heroic rescue of Cleopatra in Act 3. Surviving his leap of escape from Cleopatra's window during Ptolemy's attack in an attempt to gain full control over Egypt, Caesar comes back and wins the adoration of his Eastern female prize. Caesar's victorious return, rewarded with Cleopatra's love, reveals Handel's strategy of conveying Western superiority and the exotic feminine stereotype of the Orient. Furthermore, Cleopatra bestows the crown and scepter of Ptolemy on Caesar after he frees her from her brother's prison. However, the righteous Caesar returns the items to Cleopatra making her, as Anthony Hicks claims, "a tributary queen to Rome's great emperor."[9]

Caesar's triumph over Ptolemy and gain of full control of Egypt parallels the imperial desires of Western Europe. In light of the imperialistic situation regarding the Royal Academy, the audience recognized Caesar's valor as Western and Cleopatra's seductive and enticing schemes as Oriental. As Winton Dean notes, "*Julius Caesar* came

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[7] Ibid.
[8] See Handel, *Giulio Cesare* and Donald Burrows, *Handel* (New York: Schirmer, 1994), 143.
[9] Hicks, "*Giulio Cesare*."

at the height of the Royal Academy period and was a great hit with the public."[10] Furthermore, Handel's musical treatment of Cleopatra's seduction aria, as well as the use of chromaticism throughout the larger work, offers early anticipations of nineteenth-century representations of the Orient as luxurious and feminine.[11]

The Eastern setting of *Riccardo primo*, Handel's only opera depicting British historical figures, further reveals the aim of the Royal Academy's directors. Themes of power and superiority saturate every aspect of England's culture and surface in *Riccardo.*[12] Set in Cyprus, this opera represents the historical account of Richard I and his marriage to Princess Berengaria (Constantia) in May of 1191.

The opera opens as a terrible storm off the coast of Cyprus sinks Riccardo's English fleet. Riccardo (Richard the Lionheart) desires to retrieve his betrothed, Princess Constantia. Assuming her beloved has drowned, Constantia and her servant, Berardo, take false names and seek refuge at the estate of the villainous Isaac, governor of Cyprus. Immediately enthralled by the beauty of Constantia, Isaac decides to pursue her. Meanwhile, Richard returns to Cyprus, disguised as his own ambassador, and offers Isaac the "choice of peace or war."[13] Upon Isaac's choice of war, Richard demands the release of Constantia; Isaac consents.[14]

In Act 2, Isaac discovers the true identity of Constantia and orders his daughter, Pulcheria, to present herself to Richard as Constantia. Employing major tonalities, the

[10] Winton Dean, "Four Handel Operas," *The Musical Times* 104, no. 1446 (1963): 564.
[11] Harris, "With Eyes on the East and Ears in the West," 441.
[12] Ibid., 436.
[13] Winton Dean, "Handel's *Riccardo Primo*," *The Musical Times* 105, no. 1457 (1964): 499.
[14] George Frederic Handel, *Riccardo primo* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2005), 48-50.

flirtatious Pulcheria obeys her father, but Richard sees through her deceit. Finally, at the end of the act, Constantia and Richard meet and proclaim their unfailing love in a duet.

Constantia's aria, "Morte vieni," in the second scene of Act 3 reveals the dangers and fears surrounding Orientalized violent stereotypes. Abducting Constantia from Richard, Isaac holds her hostage, as she begs for death in her minor key aria. Employing a slow tempo, hesitant rhythm, and soft dynamics, Costantia's aria, according to Harris, "is the aural embodiment of threatened virtue."[15] With Constantia as his prisoner, Isaac confronts Richard's army.

In contrast, foreshadowing the victory of the West over the Orient, Richard's second battle aria from Act 3 employs two heroic trumpets, drums, strings, and also the oboe.[16] The military symphony that follows in the finale, as Dean notes, emphasizes the "patriotic splendor" of Britain with heroic horns and trumpets celebrating Richard's valiant victory.[17] During the triumphant celebration, Richard makes his vows of commitment to Constantia and friendship to Pulcheria, closing the opera with rejoicing and Western victory.[18]

Implicit in the opera is the comparison of George II to Richard the Lionheart. The opera's dedicatory sonnet introduces the theme of patriotism and nationalism.[19] Situating cultural discord at the center of the work, the sonnet specifically links Richard I to

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[15] Harris, "With Eyes on the East," 440.
[16] Dean, "*Riccardo Primo*," 500.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Anthony Hicks, "*Riccardo Primo*," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie. *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O004238 (accessed March 15, 2010).
[19] The dedicatory sonnet was written by the librettist, Paulo Rolli, and is cited in Italian in Reihnhard Strohm, *Essays on Handel and Italian Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 55. An English translation of the sonnet is found in Harris, "With Eyes on the East and Ears in the West," 437.

George II: "This royal drama presents to you your warrior. Predecessor, Richard the Lionheart…in his hands the destiny not only of the Orient, but of the whole world."[20] Although the opera was completed before George I died, the sonnet was added to welcome George II to the throne. The sonnet reveals England's desire for a strong, competent, and fearless leader as well as its ambition for domination and advancement over the Orient.

Themes in the plot unmistakably distinguish between East and West; however, the music of the opera bears no Eastern inspiration. The score, as Harris states, "offers little or no hint of Eastern influence."[21] This was not an unusual occurrence because eighteenth-century composers were not interested in recreating Eastern influences—their goal was to "suggest" not to "copy."[22] Although no legitimate Eastern musical characteristics occur in the score, themes of Western superiority reveal England's imperial agenda and secure Orientalist representation within the opera.

Like *Riccardo primo*, Handel's *Saul* provides a platform for Orientalist representation through its biblical setting in the geographic East. Additionally, themes of English dominance, superiority, and righteousness oppose the inferiority, violence, and savageness of the Orient and are represented through the text, characters, and instrumentation. Through the setting, text, and use of patriotic English kettledrums to depict "authentic" Eastern music, Handel's musical devices caused the English audience to identify with the heroic Israelites and to recognize the Philistines as the Other.

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[20] Harris, "With Eyes on the East and Ears in the West," 437.
[21] Ibid., 439.
[22] Michael Pirker, "Janissary music," in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/14133 (accessed April 6, 2010).

Two main themes intertwine throughout this oratorio: the Israelites' resistance to their foes and the violence and cruelty of a flawed leader. The first theme reveals a commonality among most Old Testament-based oratorios, including Handel's *Belshazzar* and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* (187 years later). In *Saul*, the victory over the Philistines opens the oratorio. However, Saul and what Howard Smither calls his "unconquerable impulses of pride, fear, and envy" provide the focal point and source of drama and action for the libretto.[23] Beginning with the celebration of David's victory over Goliath, the work reveals the biblical story of Saul's anger and jealously toward David; Jonathan and David's alliance and friendship; and finally, Saul's own demise. The story is derived from the book of I Samuel in the Old Testament, but the text is not continuous verbatim scripture.

The description of Goliath in the trio of the first scene of the oratorio sets the Orientalist tone. The phrases found in the text, "monster atheist" and "more than human pride," segregate Goliath, the Philistines, and the East culturally and religiously, and separate them from the human race.[24] Highlighting Goliath's evilness strengthens David's heroism and exalts his victory to a higher level. Accompanied by kettledrums in the third scene of Act 1, the people proclaim a chorus of celebration, singing, "Saul, who has thy thousands slain, welcome to thy friends again! David his ten thousands slew, ten thousand praises are his due!"[25]

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[23] Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, vol. 2, *Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Protestant Germany and England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 217.

[24] George Frederic Handel, *Saul* (Borough Green: Novello, 1970), 19.

[25] Ibid., 47-48. This text is loosely based on I Samuel 18: 6-8 (King James Version).

Handel used kettledrums, as an interpretation of the Jewish instrument *toph*, in an attempt to create an authentic Jewish sound.[26] The kettledrums reveal praise and celebration of David's defeat of Goliath and the Philistines in the opening chorus of exaltation in the third scene of Act 1. Representing the Israelites' patriotism in the "Dead March" in the third scene of Act 3, the kettledrums contribute to honoring those who died in battle. According to Ruth Smith:

> Resonant with national heroism, [the kettledrums] were well suited to stir the audience—some of whom were in a war-hungry mood—during *Saul's* opening chorus. Some in Handel's audience were aware of the drums' provenance, and for them the evocation of battle would have been all the more vivid. The drums were probably the ones that had been carried in Marlborough's artillery train and were paraded at his funeral in 1722, so they were also well calculated to engage the audience's patriotic sympathies with the oratorio's Israelites during the "Dead March" for the fallen heroes in Act 3.[27]

The specific kettledrums Handel uses clearly create great patriotic and militaristic resonance for his English audience. Moreover, the militaristic connection with the Duke of Marlborough establishes associations with and appropriation of relationships between East and West as part of political and nationalistic agendas. Orientalist strategies in *Saul* remain effective in conveying themes of Western power and supremacy and highlighting Eastern violence.

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[26] Ruth Smith, "Early Music's Dramatic Significance in Handel's *Saul*," *Early Music* 35, no. 2 (2007): 175.

[27] Ibid.

Derived from the Old Testament, Handel's *Belshazzar* focuses on the captivity of the Israelites by the Babylonians and the appearance of the writing on the wall during the feast in Daniel 5. Straying from the biblical account, the oratorio opens with Nitocris, King Belshazzar's mother, discussing the certain demise of Babylon. Cyrus, the Persian prince, plans to destroy Babylon by altering the course of the Euphrates River to flow through the city during Belshazzar's drunken feast. Only the feast in Act 2 demonstrates close connection with the biblical story. The Persians, Cyrus, Nitocris, and the flooding of the city are not found in the Bible; rather, according to Dean, these elements hail from the *History of Herodotus and Xenophon's Cyropaedia*.[28]

Building on the theme of the violent, tyrannical, and irrational Eastern leader found in Old Testament oratorios of the time, a primary portrayal of Orientalism occurs through Belshazzar's uncontrollable indulgence. Handel employs various Orientalist signifiers to represent the pagan Babylonians musically through Belshazzar's drunkenness in Act 2. The use of octaves and unisons in the orchestra to double the vocal line, as well as melismatic passages emphasizing the text "Behold the human beast wallowing in excessive feast," highlight the stereotype of the Orient.[29] Handel assigned a full 85 measures of music and text, "Thy gifts of all the Gods bestow, improve by use, and sweeter grow: Another bowl! 'Tis gen'rous wine, exalts the human to divine," to display Belshazzar's intoxication.[30] Stressing the king's inebriated rant, Handel focuses on the text "exalts the human to divine" with a five measure melismatic passage on the

[28] Winton Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London: Oxford University, 1959), 437.

[29] George Frederic Handel: *Belshazzar: An Oratorio* (New York: Kalmus, 1964), 152-155.

[30] Ibid., 152.

word "exalts," signifying the acceptance of Belshazzar's intoxication by his people.[31] Locke states:

> Equally vivid and even more plainly linked to then-prevailing images of the Middle East is Handel's setting of the passage in Act 2 in which the cruel, cowardly despot urges his courtiers to join him in drinking wine served in vessels that his nation's troops had stolen from Solomon's great Temple. The Babylonian king here imagines himself becoming godlike—not by engaging in virtuous behavior…but by indulging to excess in fermented beverage.[32]

The lack of control revealed through Belshazzar's drunken feast, his blasphemous desecration of the Temple's sacred vessels, and his violent enslavement of the Israelites accentuates his paganism and strengthens Handel's interpretation of Western views of the East.

In denoting the Orient, Handel focuses on the sensuality of the Babylonians and their pagan rituals. Corresponding to exotic representation in Walton's *Belshazzar,* Handel centers on not only drunkenness, but also on the sexual excess of Babylonian women. As found in the scene description of the libretto, the feast emphasizes drunken revelry and women: "A banquet room, adorned with the images of the Babylonian gods, Belshazzar, his wives, concubines, and lords, drinking out of the Jewish temple vessels, and singing the praise of their gods."[33] Dean solidifies the Orientalist symbolism of this scene by describing it as "a riot of oriental colour—wives, concubines, and all."[34]

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[31] Ibid., 155.

[32] Ralph Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Representations of the Orient* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 94.

[33] Handel, *Belshazzar*, 8.

[34] Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios*, 440.

Although Handel's distortion of the Middle East in the score of *Belshazzar* is, according to Locke, "less exotic than the subject might appear to demand," the musical distinction among the Israelites, Babylonians, and Persians provides a sense of appropriation and misrepresentation of East and West.[35] Dean states, "The dramatic design of *Belshazzar*, where three races—Babylonians, Jews, and Persians—are contrasted, and each has music appropriate to itself alone, is unique in musical history."[36] The music of the Jews, for example, employs counterpoint and at least a four-part chorus division, thus situating it within a Western musical framework. Illustrating the Persians militaristically with drums and trumpets, Handel reveals the heroic rescue of the Jews and their defeat of the Babylonians, essentially saving the West from the violence and danger of the East. On the other hand, Handel characterizes the Babylonians with octave doubling and awkward leaps in the chorus and orchestra.[37] These distinctions allowed the audience to easily recognize the heroic themes of the Israelites and Persians as illustrations of their own culture. The musical barbarism assigned to the Babylonians represents the violent and pagan characteristics of the falsified East.[38]

Serving as a continuation of the English oratorio, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* shares many similarities with the Handelian tradition of this genre. Even in the twentieth century, the emphases on chorus, biblical or spiritual texts, solos, and orchestra remain dominant characteristics of this genre.[39] Two hundred years after Handel's model,

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[35] Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 94.
[36] Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios*, 43.
[37] Ibid., 451.
[38] See Smither, *Oratorio in the Baroque Era*, 293.
[39] See Ben Finane, *Handel's* Messiah *and His English Oratorios* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 26-30.

Western composers' strategies remain fixed on binary opposition when it comes to representing East and West.

Following the Handelian tradition, *Belshazzar's Feast* divides into three main parts: "By the Waters of Babylon," "The Feast," and the celebration over the demise of Babylon in "Babylon is Fallen."[40] This oratorio also contains an opening prophecy, functioning as a dramatic overture, foretelling the doom and destruction to come.

The text of *Belshazzar's Feast* uses verbatim scripture with a few text additions by Osbert Sitwell. The text stems from the Old Testament books of Daniel 5, Psalms 137, and Isaiah 39. Continuing in the English oratorio style, a baritone soloist serves as narrator, King Belshazzar, and an unnamed Israelite. The chorus takes on several character roles as Walton unfolds the story, including the entire Israelite nation, the pagan Babylonians, and narrator. Most importantly, this work continues to convey immense dramatic action without the use of traditional theatrical elements such as costumes or scenery.[41]

Orientalizing Religion in Opera

The operatic stage provides an ideal arena for Orientalism. Said links Orientalism to a theatrical stage upon which the Orient is displayed, mounted, framed, and judged, both musically and dramatically. According to Said:

[40] Due to the symphonic nature of Walton's score, breaks between sections do not occur and no titles are assigned to the sections. Kurt Pahlen loosely divides the sections; however, I offer a detailed structural division of the work employing my own titles in Chapter IV.

[41] See Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn:* The Creation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 79 and Donald Burrows, *Handel:* Messiah (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 67-69.

> The idea of representation is a theatrical one; the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear foreigners whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe."[42]

The Orientalist stage provides an opportunity for the combination of drama and representation. Taking advantage of the Oriental platform, Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (1877), Delibes' *Lakmé* (1883), and Strauss' *Salome* (1905) project Western views of the East through religious representations in music and serve as forerunners of Walton's depiction of the Orient in *Belshazzar's Feast.*

In these operas and in Western art music more widely, musical images of Orientalism occur through tonality, instrumentation, rhythmic features, and meter. In addition to employing the *alla turca* style, composers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries used broader harmonic and stylistic signifiers to allude to the Orient. These include, but are not limited to: whole tone and pentatonic scales, augmented seconds, tritones, drones, stagnant harmonies, unpredictable and excessive melismas, vocal melismas, dissonant grace notes, and *glissandos*. The Orient is further delineated by the use of specific instrumental colors found in double reed instruments, harp, and percussion, particularly triangle, tambourine, and gong.[43]

Initially conceived as an oratorio, Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (1877), draws on the biblical story of the seduction of Samson by Dalila from Judges 16. In the opera, Samson represents the moral, righteous, and courageous Hebrew while Dalila embodies

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[42] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 63.
[43] Derek Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *The Musical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1998): 327.

the temptation and allure of the Orient. As noted by Locke and Derek Scott, Samson is portrayed as Christian, Western, and even American.[44]

Dalila's mezzo voice, overt sensuality, and pagan beliefs enforce her exoticism. Operatic convention dictates that Western female characters typically call for a soprano voice, while the dark, exotic Eastern, female characters require a mezzo-soprano range and timbre.[45] Additionally, Dalila's pagan Philistine religion, represented through ritualistic dances, casts her as Eastern, exotic, and Othered. Her initial entrance displays her Otherness as she is accompanied by the tambourine and surrounded by multiple female maidens with physically inspired Oriental music. She serves and worships multiple Gods while the West worships the "Christian" God. Locke expands upon the description of Dalila's Easternness as he states:

> We are to accept the unrestrained, predatory sexuality of Saint-Saëns' Dalila not only because we know her reputation from the Bible but also because she makes her first entrance with the scantily clad, frond-waving Philistine maidens and because she dances with them to a mesmerizing, ravishingly orchestrated Aeolian-mode tune… no specifically "Middle Eastern" style is required: we are already convinced of her palpably physical, exotic allure—at once an attraction and a danger to the more duty-bound West.[46]

In her famous aria from Act 2, "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix," Dalila accomplishes her seduction of Samson. She sings of passion and of the opening up of her

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[44] Ibid., 329, and Ralph Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other:' Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 2 (1991): 263.

[45] Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other,'" 263.

[46] Ralph Locke, "Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East," *19th-Century Music* 22, no. 1 (1998): 45.

heart like a flower in full bloom, but her selfish goal of deceit is never forgotten. She attempts to convince the audience that she truly cares for Samson, making her later betrayal even more severe. As Al-Taee notes, Dalila reveals her "dual threat" through her skill to blend one cultural standard with another without wavering.[47] Harmonically, the A-natural occurring on the word "pleurs" creates a tritone from the D-flat major tonic, reflecting insecurity in key and creating tension as Dalila requests Samson to declare his love for her. Forsaking his Western religious upbringing and ignoring the advice of the wise, old Hebrew, Samson becomes fully intoxicated with Dalila's charms and boldly professes his love for her, turning this aria into a duet. His participation represents his surrender and Dalila's successful seduction. Immediately following his surrender to Dalila's charm, a resounding clap of thunder seals Samson's fate and the Philistines overtake him. [48]

The Philistines reveal their pagan rituals in the ballet, the "Dance of the Priestesses of Dagon," at the end of Act 2 through savage, sensual, and voluptuous dance movements. Here, the Philistine maidens take on Othered characteristics by portraying this Orientalized religion as opposite to the religion of the West. Saint-Saëns uses a minor third (major sixth) and a lowered seventh to portray the Western "geographic displacement" which, as Locke notes "reinforces a sense of Easternness or perhaps 'ancientness.'"[49] Saint-Saëns completes the Eastern picture through the use of the triangle, tambourine, oboe, and flute in addition to sixteenth-note flourishes and pounding, obsessive rhythm (See Figure 1).

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[47] Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient.*
[48] Camille Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila* (Paris: Hal Leonard, 2000), 160-187.
[49] Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other,'" 266.

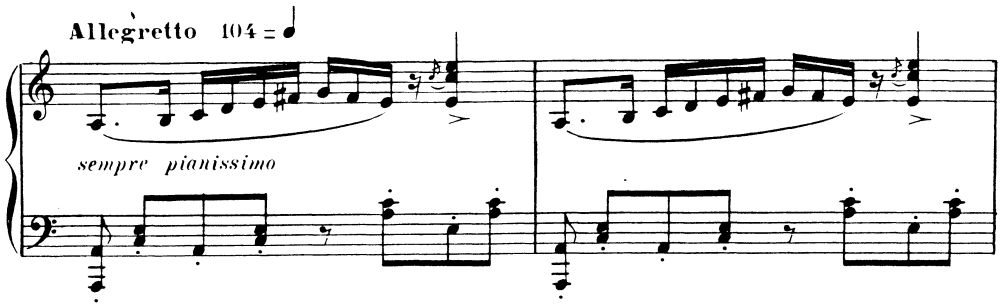

Figure 1. "Dance of the Priestesses of Dagon"

Source: Camille Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila* (Paris: Hal Leonard, 2000), 89.

Following Samson's capture and torture by the Philistines, the "Bacchanal" in Act 3 further emphasizes religious stereotype as Saint-Saëns employs the use of an Arabic modal scale with an accented augmented second in an unmetered oboe solo (See Figure 2). Using timpani, low strings, and castanets, the Philistines extend their corrupt festivities into the morning.[50] Sensual, sexual, and primitive movements in this ballet portray the Philistines' praise of their pagan god of wine, Bacchus. This, as well as the current understanding of the word *bacchanal,* which refers to uncontrolled, riotous revelry, reiterates the Western view of Eastern religions as savage, barbaric, uncivilized, and wild.[51] The music of the "Bacchanal," according to Al-Taee, exerts savageness and barbarity through intense percussion and 3 + 3 + 2 ostinatos, as well as by ornate melodic lines and "sensual harmonies."[52] Additionally, the *ad libitum* oboe solo carries the

[50] Ibid.

[51] Regas N. Bertos, "A Short Note on the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen in Florenz* 20, no. 3 (1976): 407.

[52] Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient.*

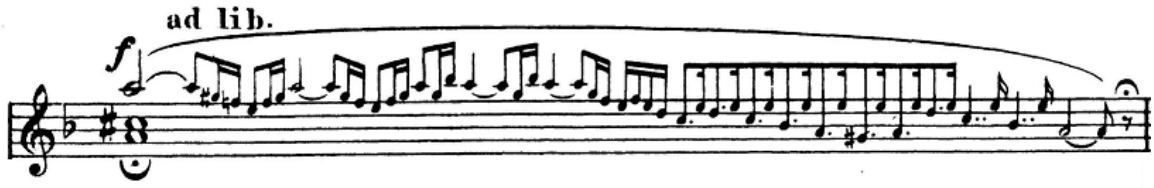

Figure 2. Oboe solo in the "Bacchanal"

Source: Saint-Saëns, *Samson et Dalila*, 215.

audience eastward through its haunting double reed timbre and unmeasured meter, suggesting improvisation (See Figure 2).

Like *Samson,* Delibes' *Lakmé* displays religious stereotypes through Orientalist representations. Set in British India, the opera opens as Lakmé's father, Nilakantha, a Brahmin priest, blesses his Hindu followers in prayer. After Nilakantha and the Hindus leave the sacred ceremonial ground, four British colonials intrude with disregard of the hallowed garden of the Hindus. While in the garden, Gerald, one of the British colonial officers, finds Lakmé's jewelry and immediately becomes enthralled by her beauty and exoticism. Gerald remains in the garden, rejecting the advice of his companions, and meets Lakmé. Upon the return of her father, Lakmé allows Gerald to escape unharmed. Nilakantha, however, is aware of the trespass; as a result, he and Lakmé go to the market dressed as beggars to reveal the intruders' identities in the market scene (Act 2, Scene 1). Lakmé sings the "Bell Song" at the request of her father, causing Gerald to give in to her exotic tones. Nilakantha stabs Gerald as he approaches Lakmé, after which she and her maidservant secretly nurse him back to health. In Act 3, following Gerald's recovery, he

responds to his Western call of duty and decides to leave Lakmé. When she overhears Gerald's intentions, she consumes a poisonous flower to end her life.[53]

Delibes' *Lakmé* is Orientalized through the displacement of Westerners in an Eastern culture. No longer only reading about the exotic East, the Westerners submerge themselves in the very stereotype that feeds their fantasy of the unknown. As noted by Said, India presented an opportunity for political dominance and control. He states:

> India itself never provided an indigenous threat to Europe. Rather it was because native authority crumbled there and opened the land to inter-European rivalry and to outright European political control.[54]

Though posing no danger to the West, India provided an exotic arena where Western Europe could assert power, thus fueling colonial expansion and Western domination over the Orient.

The misrepresentation of religion in this opera occurs through Nilakantha's violence, anger, and intolerance. Throughout the entire opera, this Brahmin priest, representing the corrupt and violent despot, expresses his hatred for the British and his desire for them to leave India. His refusal to forgive the intruder and his complete disregard for his daughter's feelings reveal his savage cruelty. The sentence of death he assigns to the intruder further unmasks Nilakantha's anger. Traditionally Hinduism is nonviolent and peaceful; the portrayal of Nilakantha as otherwise highlights the appropriation of this religion through the stereotypical Orientalist characteristics.

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[53] Hugh Macdonald, "*Lakmé*," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O005082 (accessed May 10, 2010).

[54] Said, *Orientalism*, 75.

Orientalist instrumentation occurs in the three dances "Terena," "Rektah," and "Persian" in Act 2. These dances, carried out by a group of Indian girls dressed in their culture's vibrant colors and jewelry, reveal Orientalism through meter, rhythm, instrumentation, and text. The "Terena" in a slow 6/8 meter and in the *alla turca* key of A major, shifts back and forth with minor tonalities. Combining intensely abrasive and legato strings with percussive tambourines and triangle, gives the dance a distinctly "Middle Eastern" ambiance.[55] In a quick 2/4 meter, the "Rektah" uses extensive rhythmic syncopation with flute. Duple meter and the use of high flutes or piccolos reside in the list of Orientalist musical signifiers reviewed in Chapter I. The "Persian" dance also uses a great deal of syncopation in 4/4 meter.[56] In D minor, this dance employs various chromatic sequences on the oboe.[57] Following the "Persian" dance a coda concludes these dances with increasingly frantic rhythm as the chorus sings, "Ah! Before our enchanted eyes dance for us daughter of heaven. Whirl round twice as fast. Spin even faster. With your lively dance, with your intoxicating dance."[58] The coda can be read as an imitation of the Turkish Sufis known to the West for their whirling dances. The stereotype of Eastern religions occurs in this dance through the use of Islamic rooted traditions to represent the Hindu religion of India. Although the instrumentation of these dances reflects traditional Orientalist traits, the movements of the girls in no way represent traditional Indian (or pagan) dances. Rather, the staging of these dances promotes sensuality and exoticism in the East through the parading of scantily-clad

[55] Léo Delibes, *Lakmé*: *Opera in 3 Acts* (Paris: Heugel, 1992), 134-136.
[56] Ibid., 137-141.
[57] Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," 327.
[58] Delibes, *Lakmé*, 142-147.

women. The sensual movements and costuming strengthens the Western male fantasy of the exotic Eastern female.

Orientalist instrumentation occurs in the *Scene et stances* (Act 2, no. 9). Beginning with pedal point, oboe, and augmented second intervals, Nilakantha sings of his intention to bring forth vengeance on the intruder. His text occurs on an eighth-note repetition of A-flat for four measures corresponding with the "repetitive rhythmic figures and small-compass melodies" noted by Scott as established signifiers of Orientalist representation.[59]

Following the *Scene et stances*, the "Bell Song" occurs as Lakmé, dressed as a common girl, sings at the command of her father. Through her song, Lakmé tells the legend of a young girl seduced by Vishnu, the Hindu god known as the preserver or protector. The piece begins with a wordless vocalise and an occasional lowered fourth scale degree, characteristic of Middle Eastern music, followed by the text of the story (See Figure 3). The melisma on "ah," according to Scott, is "a device that became common in representations of the 'emotional' Easterner, the lack of verbal content pointing to a contrast with the 'rational' Westerner.[60] The instrumentation of this piece employs oboes, bells, and tambourine, as well as octave doubling, pedal point, and syncopated rhythm. Together these elements provide the Eastern coloring necessary for a representation of Orientalism. Al-Taee notes the resemblance of the opening of this piece to an Islamic call to prayer through rhythmic improvisation, which places the East in "a

[59] Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," 327.
[60] Ibid., 310.

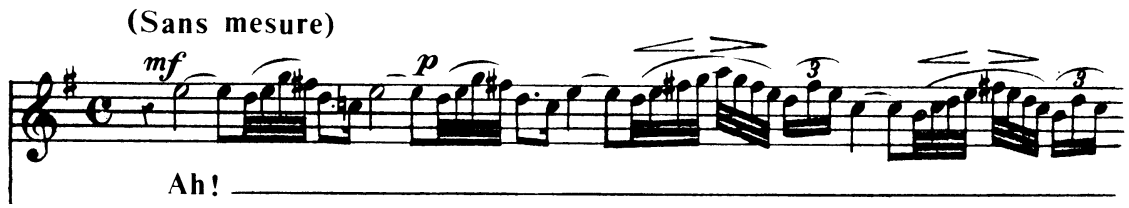

Figure 3. The vocalise from the "Bell Song"

Source: Léo Delibes, *Lakmé: Opera in 3 Acts* (Paris: Heugel, 1992), 166.

state of timelessness, stagnation, and mythical legends, shackled by rituals and ancient stories."[61]

Like *Lakmé,* Strauss' *Salome* embodies religious themes and is characterized by a seductive leading female role. This twentieth-century opera bears great resemblance to *Samson* as well, through its employment of (loosely) based biblical texts. The story comes from the New Testament Gospels of Matthew 6:4-16 and Mark 6:14-29. These verses account the beheading of John the Baptist by Herod, Herodias (his wife), and her daughter Salome.

Many discrepancies and variants exist between Strauss' opera and the biblical account of the story. In the Bible, Herod instructs his unnamed stepdaughter to dance for him. If she concedes, he promises to give her anything she asks. She dances, which is not described at all, and, at the insistence of her mother, requests the head of John the Baptist served to her on a silver platter. The daughter is not spoken of again in the Bible. However, Salome serves as the title role of the opera, representing Herod's unnamed daughter from the scriptural story. Her relationship and interaction with John the Baptist in the opera is a complete fabrication. Moreover, to increase the drama, Strauss allots

[61] See Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient*.

more than150 measures of music for Salome's performance of the "Dance of the Seven Veils." Here she fulfills Herod's (and the Western male's) desire for and infatuation with exotic women as she performs her sensual and seductive strip-tease.[62]

In the "Dance of the Seven Veils," Salome appears veiled as a convention of Western desire and Eastern sexuality. Her eight-minute display of seduction affirms the argument that the Orient is a place of temptation as she removes each veil one by one. Recent productions of the work further strengthen this representation of the Orient, as the dancer totally removes the seventh and final veil staging herself, nude, as an object of desire.[63]

The instrumentation of the dance follows the guidelines of Orientalist signifiers such as meter, tonality, and the use of double reed instruments. In C major, this dance uses duple meter with an oboe solo highlighting the augmented second throughout. Rhythmically percussive strings supported by the tambourines increase the Orientalist aspects found in the instrumentation. Throughout the opera, as noted by Susan McClary, Salome's sexuality is highlighted by the half-step chromatic "slippage" between major and minor intervals.[64] This chromaticism "flickers as an exotic fetish" occasionally coalescing into a "moment of diatonic desire, only to sink back into the flood of diffused perversity."[65]

Salome's sensual movements Orientalize the pagan religion, as did the seductive movements of Dalila. Her exotic and enticing dance captivates not only Herod, but the

[62] Richard Strauss, *Salome* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1943), 202-237.
[63] *Salome*, DVD, dir. Revel Guest (Los Angeles: Dolby Studios, 1992).
[64] Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 100.
[65] Ibid.

Western male in general. In addition, the disturbing action of kissing the mouth of the beheaded Jokanaan (John the Baptist) represents the Western view of the obsessive, vindictive, primitive, and irrational Eastern culture. While this opera does not address the misrepresentation or stereotype of foreign religions in the same manner as the previously-mentioned works, the deviation from the biblical account of the story ultimately Orientalizes Eastern culture.

Despite their diverse style, plot, instrumentation, and drama, *Samson, Lakmé,* and *Salome* deal directly with religious tensions between East and West. Like the oratorio, these works display religiously-encouraged theatrical representation. The demonstration of violence from the men and sensuality of the women proves constant in Orientalist depictions. This remains true in *Belshazzar's Feast* and its violent portrayal of the Babylonians' dominance over the enslaved Western Israelites.

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Handel's operas and English oratorios displaying themes of domination and power demonstrate the political and religious views of the West. Such nationalistic agendas promoting Western superiority also reside in later Orientalized operatic works, providing stability in the staging of Orientalism. Serving as an extension of the English oratorio, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* results from the nationalistic and political agendas established along binary oppositions from the 1700s and maintains these views in the twentieth century.

Moreover, continuity of Orientalism on the stage is found in the Western view of Eastern leaders as violent, cruel, and overly indulgent. Such representations appear through the insanely jealous Saul, the drunken tyrant Belshazzar, and, in nineteenth-

century opera, the violent High Priest of the Philistines and the vengeful and angry Nilakantha.

The plots and characters in the works discussed here differ greatly. However, the Western conception of the Orient and its religions, displayed in eighteenth-century opera and English oratorio continues in operas of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Portraying the East as feminine, violent, and barbaric, while illustrating the West as superior, righteous, and civilized, remains a constant theme in Orientalist representation and is illustrated in the combination of religious texts with Orientalist scales, harmonic style, and orchestration.

Chapter III

Reflection of Identity: William Walton's Orientalist Influences and English National Pride

Walton's exposure to Orientalism stems primarily from two sources: his experience with Orientalist operas during his education and adulthood, and his strong identification with English nationalism. By attending and involving himself with Orientalist operas, Walton submerged himself in contemporaneous views of the East and received the necessary tools to create his own Orientalist work. Meanwhile, the patriotic state of England between the wars stimulated and inspired Walton to employ Orientalist signifiers to promote England and the West. This agenda manifests in Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, particularly in the victory of the Israelites and the painting of the Babylonians as Orientals.

Exposure to such high levels of nationalism at the time of the composition and premiere of *Belshazzar's Feast* undoubtedly influenced the reception of the work and encouraged the audience's identification with the Israelites. Already nationalistic in genre, *Belshazzar's Feast* serves as only one of Walton's contributions to his nation's state of patriotism while it perpetuates the views of superiority that fueled colonialism in the nineteenth century. Walton's output of morale-boosting music for war films, as well as his commission to compose coronation music for English royalty solidified Walton's position of an advocate of English pride, while strengthening his personal patriotic views.

Exposure to Orientalist Works

Walton received his education and instruction in music from his father, Charles Walton. He remained under his father's instruction until age ten when he was accepted as a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford.[1] While under his father's tutelage, Walton was introduced to, and participated in, many great choral works that later shaped his composition of *Belshazzar's Feast*.

Walton's first exposure to Orientalism occurred through his father's participation in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at the Royal Manchester College of Music in the late 1890s.[2] As many musicologists, including Mary Hunter and Malcolm Cole, have pointed out, Mozart remains among the leading Orientalist composers. Through his operas, Mozart set the standard for musical representations of the Orient for future composers; *Zauberflöte* is no exception.[3] Charles Walton played the role of Papageno; therefore, his direct portrayal of Orientalist ideas proves minimal. However, Orientalism can be seen in this opera through its magical settings and the themes of violence and sensuality conveyed through the characters of Monostatos and Sarastro.[4]

Like *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Mozart's *Zauberflöte* served as a predecessor to and inspiration for many Orientalist representations through its use of the *alla turca* style. Mozart reveals Monostatos' Otherness immediately by way of his black

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[1] See Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6 and Stephen Lloyd, *William Walton: Muse of Fire* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 4.

[2] Lloyd, *William Walton*, 2.

[3] See Mary Hunter, *Mozart's Operas: A Companion* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2008) and Mary Hunter, "*Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and Seraglio," in *The Exotic in Western Music,* ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 58. See also Malcolm Cole, "Monostatos and his 'Sister:' Racial Stereotype in *Zauberflöte* and Its Sequel (*Das Labyrinth*)," *The Opera Quarterly* 21 (2005): 2-26.

[4] Nasser Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient in Western Music: Violence and Sensuality* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), forthcoming.

skin, anger, agitation, and violent remorseless actions. Monostatos' very name, as Cole notes, means "the isolated one;" appropriately the character displays the traits of a villain and an evil man.[5] As overseer of the Temple of Sarastro, Monostatos is placed in a position of slavery and oppression. He has little, if any, freedom and must constantly answer to those holding authority over him. His attempts to kiss and abduct Pamina reflect violence while his lack of remorse and overwhelming sense of entitlement illustrate savageness.

His only aria (and the only "Turkish" number), "Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden," conveys his remorseless attitude toward rape in Act 2. The instrumentation of unison piccolo and first violin, combined with C major tonality, duple meter, and uneven measures, accompany him as he claims he will never be loved willingly because his black skin is ugly.

Though Monostatos portrays a typical Other in the hearts and minds of Western-European opera goers, Sarastro's Otherness proves more ambivalent.[6] As priest of the temple, he represents knowledge, wisdom, light, and enlightenment—all important Masonic traits. These characteristics prove respectable and in no way reflect the savage personality of the Other. Although he encompasses the enlightened ideals of the Masons, Sarastro's skin is dark (lighter than black, but most definitely not white). This benevolent character conveys the complexity of Western thought towards Othered cultures in that he is kind and gentle, but he simultaneously exhibits violence in his punishment of Monostatos' actions against Pamina; his own feelings toward her remain unclear.

[5] Cole, "Monostatos and his 'Sister,'" 7.
[6] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte* (London: Ernst Eulenburg, 1950), 243-248.

Sarastro's spirituality surfaces in his hymn "In diesen Heil'gen Hallen." In the aria, Sarastro informs Pamina that vengeance has no place "here" and that forgiveness, with love and friendship, is the only way to help a fallen man. The compassion seen in this aria highlights Sarastro as a representation of the West through his anti-violent tactics in running his temple. Clearly he advocates benevolence, forgiveness, brotherhood, and love over the tendencies of violence, vengeance, and retaliation. However, Sarastro is Orientalized in his projection of this utopian dream beyond Western boundaries.[7]

Walton also experienced exposure to Orientalism through his own attendance of Orientalist operas. According to his wife, Susana, the first opera Walton attended was Rimsky-Korsakov's *Coq d'or,* also known as *The Golden Cockerel* (1907), in 1917.[8] She states, "*Coq d'or* absolutely transformed William's attitude towards musical life. For years he quoted it in some place or another."[9] Rimsky-Korsakov, as noted by scholars such as Nasser Al-Taee and Richard Taruskin, ranks among the most prolific composers of Russian Orientalist music.[10]

In *Coq d'or*, Rimsky-Korsakov demonstrates themes of imperialism and Russian nationalism through the use of fairytale and Orientalist representation. In the mystical "thrice-ninth kingdom in the thirtieth country," Tsar Dodon receives a Golden Cockerel from his advisor, the Astrologer, to alert him when danger draws near.[11] Out of gratitude,

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[7] Ibid., 261-263.

[8] Susana Walton, *William Walton: Behind the Façade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 44.

[9] Ibid. See also Lloyd, *William Walton,* 13.

[10] Nasser Al-Taee, "Under the Spell of Magic: The Oriental Tale in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade,*" *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context*, ed. Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 279 and Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (New York: Schirmer, 1984), 392.

[11] Gerald Abraham, "Satire and Symbolism in *The Golden Cockerel*," *Music and Letters* 52, no.1 (1971): 51.

Dodon offers to grant the Astrologer anything he wishes. Following the Astrologer's advice, Dodon prematurely invades the neighboring state, Shemakha. In Act 2, the Cockerel crows and Dodon rushes to the battlefield discovering that his two sons have died. However, rather than finding an enemy army, he sees the beautiful Queen of Shemakha. Singing of her homeland and the passion of forbidden love, the Queen mesmerizes Dodon with her "Hymn to the Sun" aria. Employing Orientalist musical elements of augmented fourths and chromatic flourishes in the flutes, clarinets, and oboes, the Queen paints an exotic tone strengthened by vocal melismas.[12] These melismatic runs force a comparison to the vocalise passages found in Lakmé's "Bell Song," as both arias employ Orientalist intervals and extended vocalises. Following the aria, Dodon becomes immediately enthralled by the Queen's beauty and withdraws his army. Returning to his kingdom in Act 3, Dodon and the Queen of Shemakha host their royal wedding but are interrupted by the Astrologer who now claims the Queen as repayment for the Golden Cockerel. Enraged, Dodon refuses the Astrologer's request and kills him. The Cockerel avenges the Astrologer's death by killing Dodon.[13]

The return of the Astrologer in the final act of the opera reinforces Rimsky-Korsakov's combination of Russian fairytale and Orientalist plot. This mixture results in what Simon Morrison calls an "essay in auto-orientalism."[14] Highlighting themes of nationalism in folk song and fairytale, along with the militaristic invasion of Shemakha, Rimsky-Korsakov clearly demonstrates the ideas behind Russian expansion into the Eastern province. The example of imperial advancement found within this opera

[12] Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Le Coq d'or*, vol. 2 (New York: Kalmus, 1950), 52-64.
[13] Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Le Coq d'or*, vol. 3 (New York: Kalmus, 1950).
[14] Simon Morrison, "Semiotics and Symmetry, or Rimsky-Korsakov's Operatic History Lesson," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 13, no. 3 (November 2001): 289.

enhances themes of Western domination and power. Predictably, *Le Coq d'or* became a model for Walton's own illustration of Western superiority in *Belshazzar's Feast.*

Similarly, in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* (1888), based on "The Arabian Nights," the composer depicts the sensuality, violence, and the timelessness of the Middle East. Musically transporting his audience, Rimsky-Korsakov creates the illusion of visiting the East without compromising the safety of European boundaries. Al-Taee expounds upon this geographical displacement by stating that the music "creates a safe distance between them (the audience) and the geographical terrains they are experiencing."[15]

Historical evidence shows Walton's further involvement with Orientalist opera through his attendance of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904) in 1918.[16] This opera reveals the story of the American Lieutenant Pinkerton and his deceit, mistreatment, and destruction of the Japanese geisha, Butterfly. He causes her to believe he will marry her and free her from the boundaries of Japanese society. However, fulfilling his call of duty and loyalty to his Western country, Pinkerton abandons Butterfly shortly after their marriage and departs for the United States. Upon his return to Japan, long after his promised arrival, Pinkerton and his new (American) wife, Kate, inform Butterfly of their plans to take her son to America to give him a better life. The sense of betrayal and desertion thrust upon Butterfly causes her to take her own life.

Despite Puccini's aim to employ Japanese folk melodies to give the work an "authentic" Japanese sense, Pinkerton's imperialistic agendas concerning the Orient are

[15] Al-Taee, "Under the Spell of Magic," 279.
[16] Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, 13.

apparent.[17] However, regardless of intent, these Japanese melodies remain a Western interpretation or imitation of Eastern culture.[18] Locke couples *Butterfly* with *Lakmé* in his description of Orientalist settings, as I discuss in my previous chapter. The similarities in plot rest in the Western intrusion into Eastern culture through militaristic expansion, allowing Western ideals and beliefs to be forcefully imposed on the trespassed culture.[19] Ping-hui Liao addresses the Orientalist aspects of *Butterfly* when he states:

> On the surface, *Butterfly* resonates with innocence and beauty. Yet it has been affiliated with and filiated to Europe's vested interests in the Orient and has been produced in opera house settings deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions, the strategies of power that constitute Orientalism. *Butterfly* reflects an unconscious "Other-phobia," inscribed in a repression of the other who is represented as feminine, as a female body to be possessed and then deserted.[20]

Similarly, in Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, we see a reinforcement of fear and phobia of the Other, translated into the story of the Babylonians' culture of violence, paganism, and barbarity.

In the same way, themes of domination and power found within *Butterfly* rampantly and rapidly infiltrated the minds of Westerners, fueling colonialism and imperialistic drive. In addition to Liao's assessment of Orientalism in *Butterfly*, Dorrine

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[17] Julian Budden, "*Madama Butterfly*," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie. *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O903144 (accessed March 5, 2009).

[18] Derek Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *The Musical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1998): 327.

[19] James Parakilas, "The Soldier and the Exotic: Operatic Variations on a Theme of Racial Encounter, Part II," *The Opera Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1993): 43-69.

[20] Ping-hui Liao, "Of Writing Words for Music Which Is Already Made: *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, and Orientalism," *Cultural Critique* 16 (1990): 39.

Kondo notes more obvious representations including the predictability of a woman's demise in opera. She claims that the Japanese identity of Butterfly as a geisha is "a quintessential Western trope of Japanese women."[21] Finally, the pinning of Butterfly by Pinkerton during the consummation of their marriage reflects his desire for ownership and control over her and the Orient. Singing the text, "I have caught you. I hold you as you flutter. Be mine," Pinkerton conveys his dominance over and possession of Butterfly.[22] McClary elaborates:

> Following this exchange, the lovers move into the scene's climactic consummation...as Pinkerton mounts his newly acquired specimen with his pin…Her sexual initiation foreshadows thematically her final self-annihilating act of ritual suicide.[23]

These aspects of the opera, widely accepted by the Western European audience, undoubtedly influenced Walton and his portrayal of foreign cultures in his own music. Submersed in ideologies of Western domination, power, and overall authority over the East, Walton inevitably demonstrated these thoughts and principles through the representation of the Israelites as Western and superior.

Walton's exposure to Orientalist musical works continued through his relationship with the Sitwell family, whom he met while at Oxford. The Sitwells—two brothers, Osbert and Sacherevell (Sachie), and one sister, Edith—introduced him to music of all sorts through their support of the arts. Osbert, according to Susana Walton,

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[21] Dorrine Kondo, "'M. Butterfly:' Orientalism, Gender, and a Critique of Essentialist Identity," *Cultural Critique* 16 (1990): 9.

[22] Giacomo Puccini, *Madam Butterfly* (New York: G. Ricordi, 1907), 28.

[23] Susan McClary, "Mounting Butterflies," in *A Vision of the Orient: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts of* Madama Butterfly, ed. Jonathan Wisenthal et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 20.

"felt it his duty to wage a battle against contemporary philistinism."[24] This wealthy family promoted the arts and, for seventeen years, provided a home for Walton while encouraging him in his musical journey. Through the Sitwells, Walton, in the 1920s, attended performances of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913), as well as Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe* (1912) which, according to Kennedy, "had a far reaching effect" on Walton.[25]

The methods of Russian nationalism displayed in the works of Stravinsky parallel the English nationalism found in Walton's oratorio. Both methods stem from a desire to promote their native culture through music while demonstrating Orientalist tactics in the process.

The "Russianness" of Stravinsky's works demonstrates Orientalism through the use of Russian folk art. According to Philip Truman, exotic effects of Russian music occurs through:

> the melos of Russian folk art—its mannerisms, the dances, the songs and ditties of her music, as well as the tales of Russian folk lore—which, in turn, bears the influence of the Orient and the Near East through Russia's Tartars and Turks, etc.[26]

Stravinsky's emphases on percussive accents, static form, pedal point, ostinatos, syncopation, and motorhythm found not only in *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*, but also in most of his works from his primitive phase, characterize his Russian-folk-inflected musical language. Truman claims that the use of these elements in Russian folk

[24] Walton, *Behind the Façade,* 52.
[25] Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, 21.
[26] Philip Truman, "An Aspect of Stravinsky's Russianism: Ritual," *Revue belge de Musicologie/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap* 46 (1992): 225.

music became, for Stravinsky, a "power of fabrication" that allowed him to "tap some unconscious folk memory."[27] Richard Taruskin expands the spectrum of meaningful folk art references to include representations of the Near and Far East.[28]

Petrushka conveys Orientalism through its instrumentation and three puppet characters. Stravinsky's use of high woodwinds, oboes and English horns, and an abundance of percussion follows the treatment and manipulation of the *alla turca* style discussed in Chapter I. This ballet provides a glimpse into the emotional characteristics and personality traits of the three puppets—Petrushka, a ballerina, and a Moor—at a carnival. The most significant representation of Orientalism occurs with the Moor puppet. This puppet leads a "life" of extravagant and exotic indulgences; prays to a coconut, representing the disapproval of his religion by the West; seduces the ballerina; and ultimately kills Petrushka.[29] These actions represent the European view of the East as uncivilized, savage, violent and angry—much like Monostatos' actions in Mozart's *Zauberflöte*. Sachie Sitwell, Walton's dear friend and patron, noted the impact of the Orientalist representation found within *Petrushka*, describing the work as "the supreme Russian ballet…no artist in any of the arts who saw it could have been unaffected by it."[30]

The Rite of Spring focuses on pagan Russia, displaying ritualistic ceremony, and worship of the earth, tribal dances, and other non-Western, non-Christian ideals. Additionally, as noted by Taruskin, *The Rite of Spring* employs a "peasant influence" and

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Richard Taruskin, "'Entoiling the Falconet:' Russian Musical Orientalism in Context," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4, no. 3 (1992): 253-280.

[29] Igor Stravinsky, *Petrushka*, ed. Charles Hamm (New York: Norton, 1967).

[30] Neil Tierney, *William Walton: His Life and Music* (London: Robert Hale, 1984), 13.

at least a dozen known Russian folk melodies.[31] The use of Russian folk melodies remains one of the main elements of nationalism within the work. The instrumentation in this ballet includes several Orientalist signifiers such as the bassoon, piccolo, oboe, tambourine, triangle, and cymbal, which are supported by heavy percussive and primitive bitonality.[32] The primitivism found within this work represents Russia as an Other to Western audiences, paralleling Walton's illustration of the Babylonians' paganism in *Belshazzar's Feast.*

Similarly, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe* exposed Walton to Orientalist elements through its instrumentation and a wordless chorus. This pastoral tale unfolds the story of two abandoned infants who are raised by shepherds and who eventually fall in love. Employing the previously established musical Orientalist indicators—flute and piccolo, oboe and English horn, triangle and tambourine, and most importantly the wordless chorus—Ravel, as noted by Locke, "painted the sunrise over mythical ancient Greece—the birthplace of 'the West'—with 'Eastern' figures."[33] The chorus on "ohs" and "ahs" musically illustrates the Orient's overt emotionality, much like the vocalise in Lakmé's "Bell Song."[34] However, Simon Morrison argues that the primitive, uncivilized wordless singing provides a "metaphor…to various compositional genres—French and Russian Orientalism, the dithyramb, the Platonic 'chora'—that leads our imagination back to an implied but not implicit primal source, as though the singing bore the trace of psycho-

[31] Richard Taruskin, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 134.

[32] Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 2000).

[33] Ralph Locke, "Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East," *19th-Century Music* 20, no. 1 (1998): 50. See also Maurice Ravel, *Daphnis and Chloe* (New York: Dover, 1989).

[34] Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," 310.

mythical events."[35] Set in the place of origin for Western civilization, Ravel locks in the Orientalist stereotypes of the East as ancient, timeless, and even primitive, while using Orientalism as an escape or refuge from the West. These techniques confirm Locke's assessment of Ravel's approach to the Orient as an "imaginative space."[36] This space represents a place of retreat from the functional and effective West and the actual Middle East, with all its constraints.[37]

While the aforementioned works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky, and Ravel display different styles of Orientalist representations, commonality rests in their influence over Walton. His exposure to and experiences with these Orientalist works surface in his on music and are later displayed in *Belshazzar's Feast.* The controversial imitation and misrepresentation in the above works shaped Walton's musical strategies and modeled for him Western Europeans' views toward the East.

Western Superiority and National Pride

In addition to his exposure to Orientalist operatic works, Walton's involvement with English nationalistic compositions and with music for English war films confirm his imperialistic views of the West. Walton's commission by the BBC and his exemption from the army during World War II to write music for patriotic films reveal pride in his English identity and convey his promotion of English nationalism. To be sure, pride, power, and imperialism remain closely connected with British culture as seen through the commission and reception of *Belshazzar's Feast* in interwar Britain.

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[35] Simon Morrison, "The Origins of *Daphnis et Chloe* (1912)," *19th-Century Music* 28, no. 4 (2004): 63.

[36] Locke, "Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers," 49.

[37] Ibid.

Following World War I, Britain suffered economic depression and the continuation of colonial expansion and international trade proved worrisome.[38] Despite the poor position of economic finances, however, imperialistic desire was at no risk of decline. In fact, levels of patriotism remained high. British historian John Darwin states that, in the interwar years, "There is little evidence that Britain's imperial role was under serious attack. Considerations for imperial defense preserved an iron grip on the strategic imagination of ministers and their advisors."[39] For example, despite the devastating economic situation, England expanded the Royal Navy to strengthen and secure national defenses. As Richard Overy notes, "Britain began to rearm in 1934 and accelerated the program with a £1,500 million commitment over four years to strengthen the navy and imperial defenses."[40] Although England's economic situation weakened after World War I, her influence in Europe continued to uphold the tradition of power and imperialism.[41]

In addition to the British government's determination to sustain the legacy of imperialism, the citizens displayed an increase in patriotism. According to Geoffrey Field, the development of patriotism is connected with the "invocation of English character and values, so pervasive in…the press."[42] These aspects of English identity saturated the media through radio and film. Due to the display of heightened levels of patriotism in media and entertainment, the promotion of English nationalism spread throughout every aspect of English culture. For example, patriotic and nationalistic

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[38] See John Darwin, "Imperialism in Decline? Tendencies in British Imperial Policy between the Wars," *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 3 (1980): 657-679 and Brian Blouet, "The Imperial Vision of Halford Mackinder," *The Geographical Journal* 170, no. 4 (2004): 324.

[39] Darwin, "Imperialism in Decline," 660.

[40] Richard Overy, *The Inter-War Crisis 1919-1939* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2010), 87.

[41] John R. Frances, "The Greatest Power on Earth: Great Britain in the 1920s," *The International History Revie*w 13, no. 4 (1991): 731.

[42] Geoffrey Field, "Social Patriotism and the British Working Class: Appearance and Disappearance of Tradition," *International Labor and Working Class History* 42 (1992): 21.

themes in films inspired the population to keep England first. Films such as *One Family* (1930) and *Fire over England* (1937) reveal themes of nationalism and pride. These films highlight the importance of the British Empire, persuading the public to recognize the superiority of English nationality. As Stephen Shafer notes:

> The occasional appearance of overt celebrations of a kind of national identity make it clear that British film goers during this period were very familiar with plots and stories designed to remind them of the glorious islands on which they were fortunate enough to live.[43]

Intending to continue raising English morale, Walton composed music for war films designed to elevate patriotism, nationalism, and pride in English identity and culture.[44]

In 1929, Walton was approached by the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) to compose a work for chorus and orchestra at a time when patriotism, through the promotion of English values, was incredibly high. *Belshazzar's Feast* exceeded the limits of the small chorus and orchestra initially set by the BBC and soon was no longer considered specifically written for broadcast. In turn, it received its premiere at the 1931 Leeds Festival, featuring two choruses and a full orchestra of more than thirty different instruments, not to mention an option of two brass bands placed on opposite sides of the conductor. The addition of the brass bands was Walton's sarcastic reaction to the conductor, Malcolm Sargent, who expressed his expectation for the work's failure due to

[43] Stephen C. Shafer, *British Popular Films 1929-1939: The Cinema Reassurance* (London: Routledge, 1997), 220-225. See also Lawrence Napper, *British Cinema and Middlebrow Culture in the Interwar Years* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2009), 195.

[44] Kennedy, *Walton*, 113.

its large forces.[45] However, Walton successfully employed the brass bands to highlight the paganism of the Babylonians' devotion to false gods in Act 2.

The success of *Belshazzar's Feast*, upon its premiere in 1931, came as an unexpected surprise to Walton and his contemporaries. Kennedy notes that the performance and the work were hailed as "a tumultuous success" while others described it as, "a landmark in British choral music…since Vaughan William's *A Sea Symphony* at the 1910 festival."[46] Additionally, conductor Sir Henry Wood described the piece as "truly marvelous, like the world coming to an end…its dramatic power is superb…no orchestral work has ever carried me away so much!"[47]

The eager acceptance of *Belshazzar's Feast* at the time of its premiere, resulted from the popular attitudes of patriotism and nationalism in radio and film. The audience recognized the themes illustrated throughout the work and identified with the Western Israelites, latching onto their suffering and rejoicing in their victory. The audience's connection with the Israelites enabled Walton to be regarded as Britain's most important classical composer of the twentieth-century.[48]

That the Orientalist plot of *Belshazzar's Feast* was motivated by nationalistic pride during a difficult time in the history of the British Empire proved pivotal to its success. *Belshazzar's Feast* offered Walton an opportunity to implement the prevailing stereotypes he had witnessed from an early age through attending Orientalist works that continued dynamic superior attitudes regarding East-West relations. The BBC

[45] Tierney, *William Walton*, 66, and Lloyd, *Muse of Fire*, 103-104.
[46] Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton*, 59.
[47] Tierney, *William Walton*, 66.
[48] "Walton, William," in *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 4th ed., ed. Colin Larkin, *Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/epm/62221 (accessed April 12, 2010).

commission gave Walton the desire and momentum to complete the work and ultimately carry on the tradition of the English oratorio through his promotion of English nationalism, culture, and music.

Chapter IV

Orientalism in *Belshazzar's Feast*

In his treatment of the music of *Belshazzar's Feast*, and drawing on established Orientalist signifiers, from the *alla turca* to nineteenth-century exotic tropes, Walton equates the Israelites to Westerners and the Babylonians to Easterners along binary oppositions. Sitwell aids Walton through his text additions, which describe the city of Babylon, the righteous violence of the Israelites, and the lament for the fall of this glorious city. Walton's musical strategies include his use of tonality, exotic orchestration, and unusual meter to intensify the images of the text. In this chapter, I analyze specific musical strategies exercised by Walton to illustrate the violence and sensuality of the Orient. Specifically, I examine the opening chorus of "By the waters of Babylon" from Act 1, the description of the city of Babylon and the praise of false gods from Act 2, and the fall of the city in Act 3. I argue that Walton's treatment of the biblical story and Sitwell's text continue Orientalist representation in the twentieth century, sustaining it within the English oratorio tradition.

Orientalism in Text

Belshazzar's Feast follows the tradition of the English oratorio through its use of verbatim scripture. Sitwell's text additions, meanwhile, provide a stage for Walton to amplify Orientalist representations by highlighting the righteous violence of the West toward the East. The text elaborates on the exoticism and glamour of the city, and portrays the Israelites' lament for the loss of the fascinating, alluring Babylon.

Table 1. Structural Overview of *Belshazzar's Feast*[1]

Sections:	Act 1: "By the Waters of Babylon"	Act 2: "The Feast"	Act 3: "Babylon is Fallen"
Text:	Psalm 137; Sitwell	Daniel 5; Sitwell	Psalm 81; Sitwell
Tonality:	D minor	D minor; C major	F major; D minor
Forces:	Full chorus; baritone solo "If I forget Thee"	Full chorus; baritone solos "Babylon was a Great City" and "The Writing on the Wall"	Full chorus, semi-chorus, and double chorus
Orchestration:	Flute, piccolo, oboe, *tambour militaire*, and strings	Flute, piccolo, oboe, two brass bands, *tambour militaire*, triangle, cymbal, bass drum, harp, and strings	Flute, piccolo, oboe, *tambour militaire*, timpani, xylophone, and strings
Treatment of Instrumentation:	Trills in high registers of woodwinds, tremolos in percussion, chromatic flourishes, *glissandi*, augmented intervals	Trills in woodwinds, tremolo in percussion, *glissandi*, and augmented intervals	Trills, *glissandi*, and meter shifts

The biblical account of the Babylonians in the Old Testament reveals a history of violence and cruelty. Throughout the Old Testament, the mention of the Babylonians evokes brutality and bloodshed not only through their confrontation with the Israelites, but also through their desecration of the temple of God. Walton's illustration of the Israelites as Western through his lament for Jerusalem and his angry and agitated musical portrayals of the Babylonians' violence successfully strengthen the long-held view of Western Christians as the new chosen people.

[1] The Acts and subdivisions listed in this table are of my own analysis. Walton's score employs continuous music without breaks between sections. This table presents the various sections of the piece in an organized manner to provide the reader with a guide to accompany my discussion of *Belshazzar's Feast.*

The violence exhibited by the Israelites through Sitwell's text additions conveys a righteous tone, echoing the Western Christians' justification of hostility during the Crusades. Brutality displayed by the East represents an evil barbarity, while Western aggression towards the East is viewed as a just and necessary force. Norman Daniel addresses the justification of Western violence stating:

> To fight on the Crusade was itself a religious vocation, and the views of rigorous enthusiasts achieved a widespread popularity…We can only conclude that the use of violence against Islam was seen as inherently or axiomatically just.[2]

The double standard of cruelty and barbarity between East and West serves as only one inconsistency found within the Western view of the East. Nasser Al-Taee draws on the issue raised by Daniel as he recognizes the contradictory Western view of brutality, claiming:

> The use of force was almost universally considered to be a major characteristic constituent of the Islamic religion, and an evident sign of its error. Christians took this view while at the same time enthusiastically embracing the almost identical doctrines of Crusades.[3]

This complex history of violence in terms of East and West provided Walton and Sitwell with an opportunity to differentiate between the hostility exhibited by the West and the cruelty enacted by the East. For example, Sitwell's first addition of text to the

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[2] Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1993), 132.

[3] Nasser Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient in Western Music: Violence and Sensuality* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), forthcoming.

scriptural story which reads, "For with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down and shall be found no more at all."[4]

Sitwell provided Walton with theatrical imagery of a glamorous yet corrupt Babylon through his sensuous and exotic textual portrayal of the city in Act 2. The description of the city of Babylon amplifies the level of Orientalism within the piece as Sitwell departs from the exact words of scripture. Yet the text remains true to the common conception of this ancient city—vibrant, full of commotion, trade, exotic and extravagant items, and most importantly, uncivilized, pagan, and sinful behavior. Sitwell writes:

> Babylon was a great city—its merchandise was of gold and silver, of precious stones, of pearls, of fine linen, of purple, silk, and scarlet, all manner vessels of ivory, all manner vessels of most precious wood, of brass, iron and marble, cinnamon, odours and ointments of Frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour, wheat and beasts, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves, and the souls of men.[5]

The itemized list of extravagant and exotic goods strengthens the sensuality of this Oriental city and conveys the Western desire to obtain such luxuries through the domination and control over the East.

Sitwell's account of the city bears great similarity to the visual portrayal of the market scene (Act 2, Scene 1) in Delibes' *Lakmé.* As I argued in Chapter II, this opera is saturated with cultural and religious misrepresentations. In the famous market scene, the audience sees to a bazaar with merchants of all races attempting to bargain and sell items to British invaders in the midst of chaos and noise. Although Sitwell's description does

[4] William Walton, *Belshazzar's Feast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 24-27.
[5] Ibid., 28.

not include dances or female exoticism, the potential for sinful behavior exists due to the exotic, desirable, and luxurious items readily available.[6]

The sensuous description of the city implies fear, danger, and immoral behavior, maintaining the Western trepidation that so often coexists with the enticing lure of the Orient. Sitwell's demonstration of fear occurs in his text "slaves and the souls of men" in the passage cited above. "Slaves" conveys the barbarity and danger of the Babylonians as seen in their treacherous rule over the Israelites while "the souls of men" reveals the consequences of sinful actions and how one was expected to pay for cruel behavior.

The lament for the fall of Babylon in Act 3, Sitwell's final text addition, expresses the Israelites' grief for a lost fantasy, rather than lost lives. The thrill of the exotic and unknown appears more important than the tragedy of death:

> While the kings of the earth lament and the merchants of the earth weep, wail, and rend their raiment. They cry alas: that great city in one hour has her judgment come. The trumpeters and pipers are silent, harpers have ceased to harp and the light of a candle shall shine no more.[7]

Psalm 81 reveals the Israelites' excitement and joy for their long-awaited deliverance from the hand of the Babylonians; however, Sitwell pays Western homage to the fall of an exotically glamorous city through the text "and the light of a candle shall shine no more."[8]

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[6] Similar depictions of exoticism can be seen in Hollywood's interpretation of Eastern cities found in Disney's *Aladdin* (1992) as well as *Gladiator* (2000). These films highlight the Orientalized differences between East and West as they express the confusion and chaos of the dusty and desolate Eastern capitals.

[7] Walton, *Belshazzar*, 118-132.

[8] Ibid.

Orientalist Representation through Tonality and Orchestration

Coinciding with the Orientalist musical signifiers listed by Derek Scott and outlined in Chapter I, Walton employs specific tonalities, instrument treatment, and meter shifts to represent the Orient in *Belshazzar's Feast.* His strategies deliberately characterize the Orient as backward and awkward while identifying with the plight and triumph of the Israelites. This is achieved through the *alla turca* tonalities of C major, D major, and F major, and common musical tropes. Walton associates the Orient with chromaticism while exotic meter changes reveal his personal awareness of a long history of appropriation in music.

The significance of Walton's tonality assignments rests in his use of sharp signature Janissary keys to designate the Babylonians and the flat signature D minor to convey the Israelites' sorrow, suffering, and rejoicing. These key segregations occur throughout the piece and allow the audience to tonally follow the story and clearly identify East and West.

In "By the Waters of Babylon," D minor represents the distress of captivity. This tonality also accompanies the righteous violence and anger of the West as the Israelites describe their experiences of enslavement. Further affirming the Israelites' tonal identity, the expression of loyalty to God and to Jerusalem in the baritone solo, "If I forget Thee" (Psalm 137) illustrates the Western values of patriotism in support of Western culture. Walton portrayed the Israelites' suffering so effectively that his audience thought him to "have Jewish blood," solidifying his Western representation of and self-identification with the Israelites.[9] Walton's convincing musical representation of the Israelites' distress

[9] Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Walton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 59.

allowed his audience to fully connect with the Israelites while recognizing their Western connotations.

To express the joy and freedom experienced by the Israelites in Act 3, during the fall of Babylon, Walton employs the relative major of their key identity, F major. Although a Janissary key, this major tonality represents the West's triumph and defeat over the East while remaining closely connected to the Israelites' D minor. Contrasting the major tonality of this section, D minor returns for the lament of the fall of Babylon as the Israelites cease rejoicing over their newfound freedom and mourn for the loss of exoticism, allure, and enticement found in the Orient. The Israelites' D minor representation remains through the conclusion of the work in their final cry of praise to God with resounding antiphonal "Alleluias."

Contrasting the tonality he assigns to the Israelites, Walton designates *alla turca* keys to enhance his Othering of the Babylonians. In Act 2, Walton demonstrates the barbaric stereotype of the Orient through paganism by bringing false gods to life with the Janissary keys of C major for the god of gold, silver, and brass; A major for the god of wood; and D major to praise all of the gods collectively. Refraining from the relative major of the Israelites' D minor, which would have made for a smooth and fitting modulation, Walton successfully segregates the Babylonians' culture tonally, allowing the audience to clearly distinguish between West and East, "us" and "them." The use of these keys increases the separation between two colliding forces and establishes continuity with eighteenth and nineteenth-century practices.

Strengthening Walton's Orientalist tonalities, orchestration and the treatment of instruments reinforce the representation of East and West. Through the use of trills in

woodwinds, bombastic percussion, *glissandi*, chromatic flourishes, and awkward intervals, Walton paints the East with what he perceives to be the colors and sounds of the Orient.

Walton assigns trills in the woodwinds to express the Israelites' anger and hatred towards their oppressors. The exasperated illustration of impending destruction of the Babylonians is clear as Walton uses the oboe—a double reed instrument associated with Orientalist representation—and manipulates its scoring with trills.[10] As discussed in Chapter I, the *alla turca* representation of Janissary music employs trills as well as high piccolo as musical signifiers of the Orient.

Contrasting the righteous violence of the West towards the East, Walton instrumentally manipulates trills in the description of the feast in Act 2 to identify the Babylonians' Oriental stereotypes of indulgence and lack of self-control, as well as King Belshazzar's tyranny. During the praise of false gods and the worship and extolment of the king in Act 2, Walton continues his exploitation of *alla turca* trills to illustrate the barbaric representation of paganism and blasphemy against the Western God (See Figure 4). Finally, Walton's application of trills in the flutes, piccolos, and oboes demonstrates the defeat of the East by the West as the Israelites sing of their deliverance in Act 3. The text "blow up the trumpet, blow the trumpet in the new moon" accompanies the Orientalist trills in the winds as the Israelites—and ultimately the West—celebrate the fall and destruction of the Orient.[11]

[10] Derek Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *The Musical Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1998): 327.
[11] Walton, *Belshazzar*, 107-109.

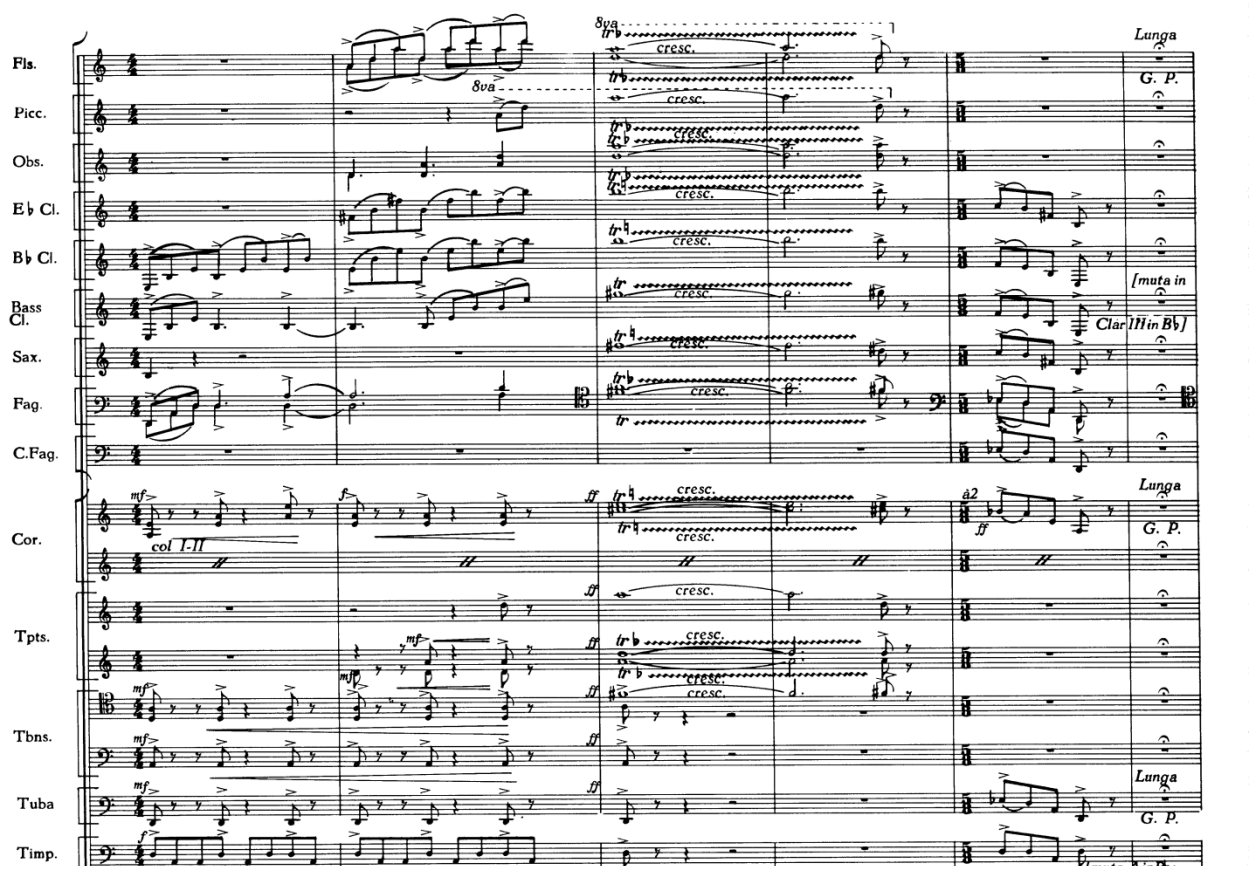

Figure 4. Trills on "O king live forever!"

Source: William Walton: *Belshazzar's Feast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 96.

Clangorous tremolos and bombastic cymbal crashes further illustrate the Eastern affiliation of the Babylonians as these percussive elements characterize the chaotic, uncivilized Orient. Walton employs various percussion instruments found within Scott's list of signifiers to personify the false gods of the Babylonians in Act 2 (See Table 2). Assigning cymbal and bass drum to the god of gold; glockenspiel and triangle to the god of silver; and xylophone, wood block, and tambourine to the god of wood; Walton brings the pagan idols of the Babylonians to life while in employing musical symbols of the Orient (See Figure 5). Walton represents the god of stone with tremolo in the cymbal and

tambourine and exemplifies the Babylonians' praise of all of the false gods through the use of tambourine, cymbal, and gong with *ff* dynamic markings to increase the chaotic depiction of the Orient's commotion.

Amplifying Orientalist representation through the treatment of instruments, Walton assigns *glissandi* to continue his Eastern characterization of the Babylonians. *Glissandi,* as Scott notes, represent the Orient through the mystical and exotic sounds of the harp. In the praise of King Belshazzar in Act 2, Walton employs this musical depiction of the Orient as the Babylonians cry "O king live forever!"[12] The harp *glissandi* accompany the trills in the woodwinds to complete this demonstration of blasphemy as the Babylonians worship and extol the king above the Western God (See Figure 6).

Table 2. False gods

False gods:	Gold	Silver	Iron	Wood	Stone	Brass	All false gods
Tonality:	C major	C major	E- flat major	A major	B major	C major	D major
Orchestration:	flute, piccolo, cymbal, and bass drum	flute, piccolo, oboe glock., and triangle	gong with iron stick and anvil	xylophone, wood block, and tambourine	slap stick, tambourine, and cymbal	two brass bands, tenor drum, tambour -ine, and cymbal	flute, piccolo, oboe, tambour-ine, gong, cymbal and brass

[12] Walton, *Belshazzar*, 96.

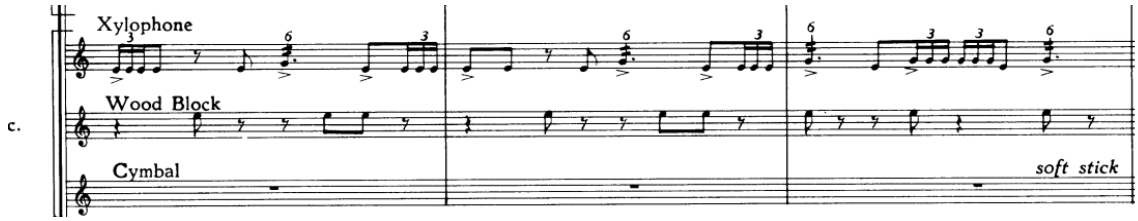

Figure 5. The god of wood

Source: Walton, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 58.

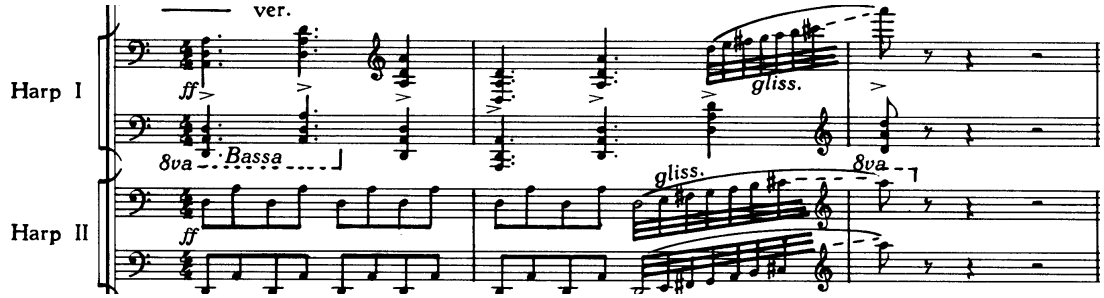

Figure 6. Harp *glissandi* on "O king live forever!"

Source: Walton, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 96.

Chromatic flourishes throughout the orchestra continue to correlate the Babylonians with the East. Walton employs ascending chromatic runs of sixteenth-notes in Act 1 to describe the Babylonians' imminent punishment for the capture and enslavement of the Israelites (See Figure 7). Residing in Scott's list of musical signifiers of Othered cultural representations, chromaticism remains effective in strengthening the Eastern identity of the Babylonians.

Contrasting the brutal destruction of the Orient during the fall of Babylon in Act 3, Walton illustrates the fear, confusion, and oppression of the Israelites, again, by using chromaticism. In Act 1, the Babylonians force the Israelites to perform their religious songs for entertainment. The Israelites respond with "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" as chromatic flourishes bounce among flutes, piccolos, oboes, and clarinets, conveying the insecurity and uncertainty of fate (See Figure 8).[13]

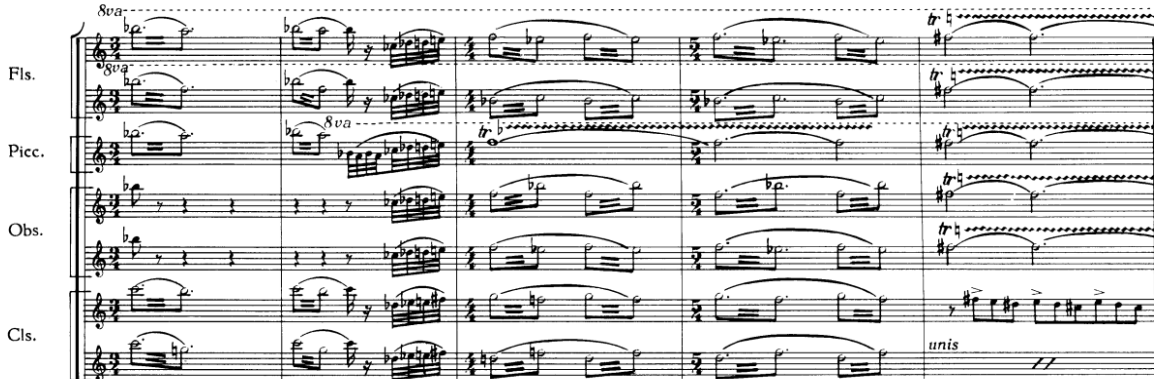

Figure 7. Chromatic flourishes on "for with violence"

Source: Walton, Belshazzar's *Feast*, 24.

[13] Walton, *Belshazzar*, 10-11.

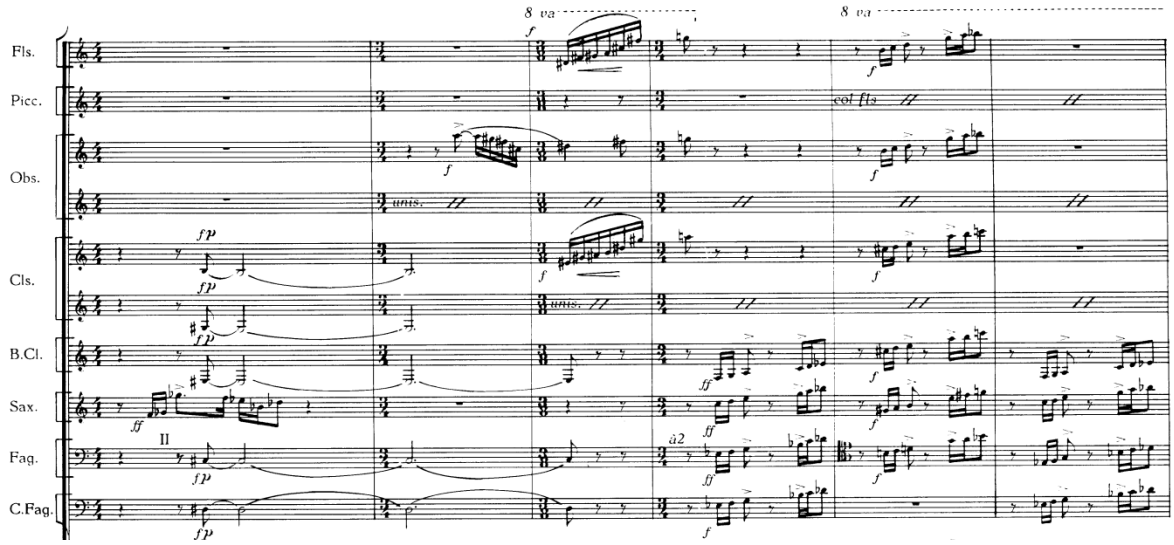

Figure 8. Chromatic flourishes on "Sing us one of the Songs of Zion"

Source: Walton, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 8.

Augmented second intervals and augmented fourths (tritones) symbolize the Oriental allusion to Eastern modes.[14] Appropriately, Walton employs various awkward intervals to distinguish between Eastern and Western identification. Specifically in the baritone solo description of the city of Babylon in Act 2, augmented fourth intervals and awkward leaps of sevenths highlight the exoticism and glamour of the Orient through this catalog of enticing and alluring items (See Figure 9).

Additionally, the oboe and clarinet solo interlude in Act 1 aurally reveals the Eastern setting of the story through the manipulation of the augmented fourth. Similarly, the use of the augmented second in the oboe solo in the "Bacchanal" from Saint-Saëns'

[14] Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," 327.

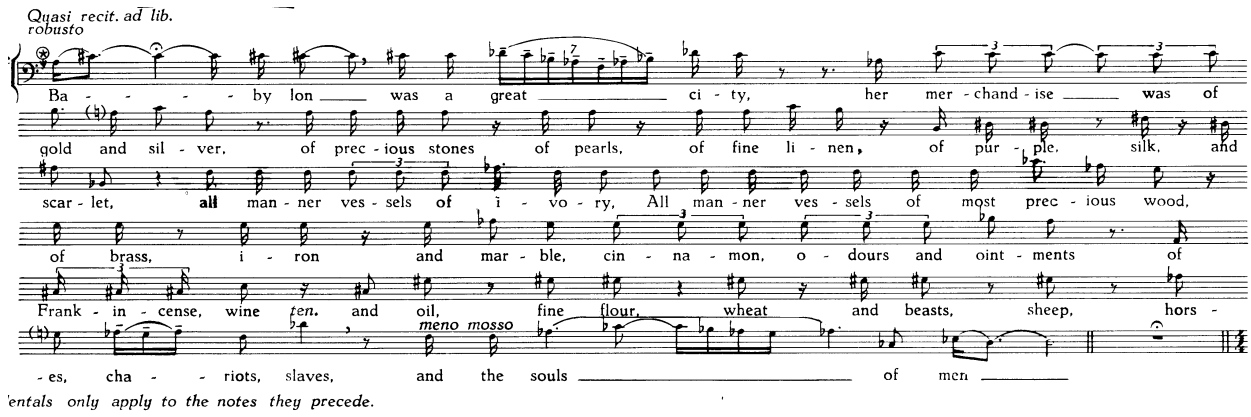

Figure 9. Baritone solo description of the city of Babylon

Source: Walton, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 28.

Samson et Dalila, Orientalizes the East as the Philistines participate in ritualistic, pagan worship.[15]

Signifying the defeat of the Babylonians in Act 3, Walton creatively involves the woodwinds and percussion instruments previously associated with the Babylonians in the celebration of the Israelites. His treatment of these instruments, however, is now tame and does not involve the Orientalist tropes of augmented intervals (See Figure 10).

The musical manipulation of the East through the treatment of Eastern instrumentation bears similarity to Haydn's "Military Symphony" (Symphony no. 100) and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Both composers include *alla turca* passages in the finales of their symphonies. Haydn employs these *alla turca* sections in both his second and fourth movements. He reuses the Turkish woodwind and percussion signifiers to represent the defeat of the East. Similarly, Beethoven uses the Turkish Janissary

[15] Ralph Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other:' Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 3 (1991): 261-302.

instruments in the finale of his Ninth Symphony to accompany the march to Elysium. Likewise, Walton employs this technique as a final representation of Western domination and superiority over the Orient by taking over the instruments and musical characteristics of the culture that was conquered.[16]

Walton assigns the triple 3/4 meter to convey the Israelites' Western characterization and the Janissary duple 4/4 meter to reveal the Babylonians' Easternness. He signifies the Israelites' anger towards the Babylonians through the use of agitated rhythmic figures and meter shifts in "By the Waters of Babylon" in Act 1. The Orientalist duple meter is used as the Israelites describe the horrible things required of them by their oppressors (See Table 3). The meter endures several changes, including to 5/4, before returning to the sorrowful 3/4 to convey the Israelites' confusion, instability, and

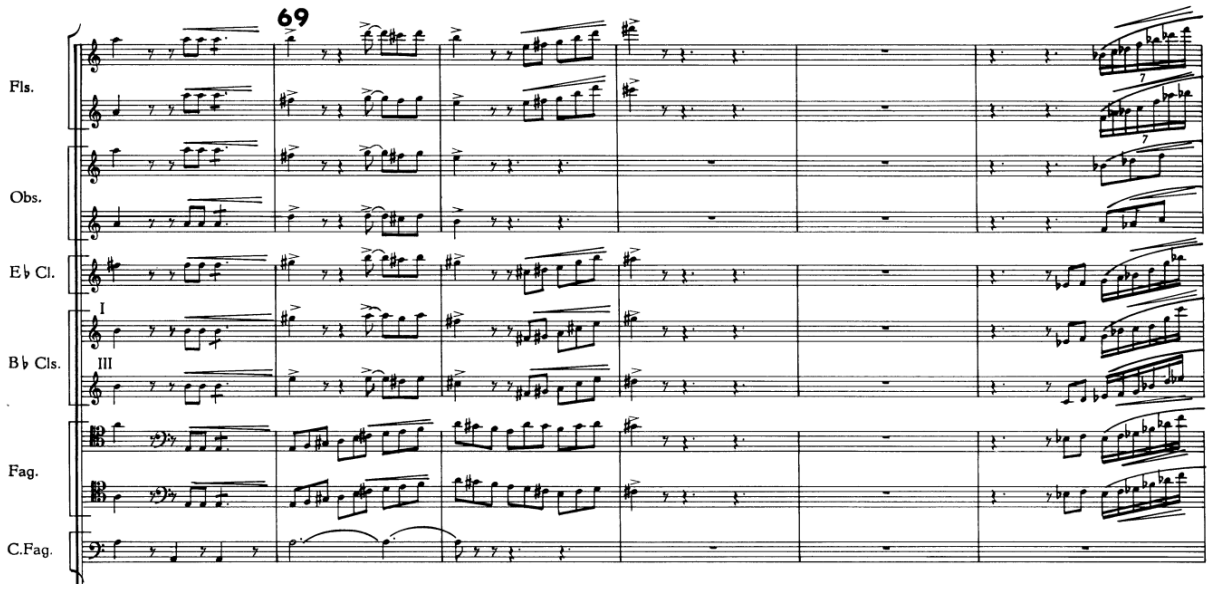

Figure 10. Babylon is fallen

Source: Walton, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 136.

[16] Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient.*

Table 3. Meter changes in Act 1

Meter:	3/4	4/4	5/4	3/4	4/4	3/4
Measure:	24-51	52-56	57	58-59	60	61-64
Text:	"By the Waters of Babylon there we sat down and hanged our harps upon the willows. For they that wasted us…"	"Required of us mirth, they that carried us away captive…"	"required of us a song"	"sing us one of the songs"	"of Zion"	"sing us one of the songs of Zion" (repeated)

uncertain fate. Contrasting the Israelites' 3/4 meter signature, Walton uses the unusual meter of 12/4 and 6/4 in Act 3 as the Israelites lament the loss of glamour and exoticism in the destruction of Babylon. According to Scott, unusual meter and "irregular rhythms" are signifiers used to denote exoticism and Orientalism.[17]

Walton employs meter to focus on the exoticism of the feast. As does Handel in *Belshazzar*, Walton showcases the drunkenness of the king as well as the presence of exotic women through his musical treatments of the words "concubines" and "drink." Assigning four *a cappella* measures to the word "concubines," Walton emphasizes the Western male fantasy of Eastern exotic women. Meanwhile, he allots two measures of homorhythmic choral presentation, switching between 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4 with the one-

[17] Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," 327.

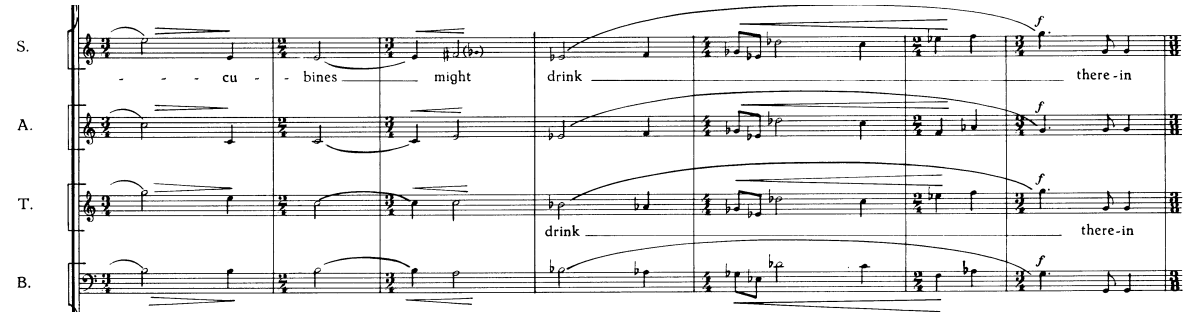

Figure 11. Text augmentation on "Drink"

Source: Walton, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 38.

syllable word "drink" to exemplify the savage, uncivilized, and gluttoness stereotypes of the Orientalized East (See Figure 11). Similarly, Handel had employed a five measure melismatic passage on Belshazzar's text, "Tis gen'rous wine…exalts the human to divine."[18]

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By way of tonality, orchestration, musical signifiers, and meter, Walton clearly differentiates between East and West. Through the polar oppositions of a corrupt, pagan, and violent Babylonian East and a just, monotheistic West, Walton musically solidifies and exemplifies the rampant views of the East present throughout Western culture, music, and history. The combination of the scriptural historical story, Sitwell's Orientalist text additions, and Walton's musical strategy in assigning identity to both the Western Israelites and the Eastern Babylonians, results in an effectively Orientalized oratorio.

[18] George Frederic Handel, *Belshazzar: An Oratorio* (New York: Kalmus, 1964), 8.

Conclusion

Walton's musical strategies of representation coupled with Sitwell's text additions place *Belshazzar's Feast* within the canon of Orientalized musical works and creates an occasion for musicologists to investigate appropriations in music through the English oratorio genre. Walton's oratorio offers a new opportunity to expand the examination of Orientalist elements into the sacred venues of an increasingly secular world, thus cementing the discursive nature of the field.

Building on binary oppositions, Orientalism reflects Western views of the East as corrupt, violent, and sensual. Through this exercised value judgment, the West punishes the East for existing beyond the guidelines of Western culture. According to Edward Said:

> The Orient is corrected, even penalized, for lying outside the boundaries of European society, "our" world; the Orient is thus *Orientalized,* a process that not only marks the Orient as the province of the Orientalist but also forces the uninitiated Western reader to accept the Orientalist codifications as the *true* Orient.[1]

In Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* the musical elements assigned to the Eastern Babylonians confirm Said's claim. Walton's Western view of the Orient is unveiled without regard to or consideration of factual truths about the East.

The misrepresentation of religion through musical settings of scripture proves that Orientalism has seeped into even the most sacred and protected aspects of Western culture. The previously overlooked arena of Orientalist portrayal in the English oratorio

[1] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 67.

strengthens Said's claim that no end is in sight for misconceptions and stereotype.[2] The fact that the verbatim scripture of *Belshazzar's Feast* proves blanketed with Orientalist signifiers demonstrates the rampant Orientalist portrayal in Western culture.

The "tumultuous success" of *Belshazzar's Feast* through its "barbaric pagan and distinct Judaic-Christian character" magnifies Orientalist practices in this English oratorio.[3] Walton's portrayal of the Israelites as Western encouraged the English audience to identify with the pain and suffering of the Israelites, thereby taking the cruelty exuded by the Orientalized Babylonians to heart. In this way, audiences enacted Said's argument that the Western listener accepts Orientalist representations as truth.[4] Reviewed as "stark Judaism from first to last culminating in ecstatic gloating over the fallen enemy…the utter negation of Christianity," *Belshazzar's Feast* confirms that Orientalist views towards the East remained popular with the Western audience of the twentieth century.[5]

The Orientalist elements of *Belshazzar's Feast* parallel the objective of musical Orientalisms found in opera; the elements serve as a mask for appropriation and misrepresentation.[6] This mask, described by Matthew Head, critiques British society through its identity of superiority and hegemony over the Orient expressed by means of theatrical presentation.[7] The representation of barbarity in the Babylonians' violence, cruelty, and paganism has long been labeled as "dramatic" without recognizing the

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[2] Ibid., 44.
[3] A. H. Halsey, "The Writing on the Wall," *Oxford Review of Education* 19, no. 1 (1993): 3.
[4] Said, *Orientalism*, 67.
[5] Halsey, "The Writing on the Wall," 3.
[6] See Matthew Head, "Musicology on Safari: Musicology and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory," *Music Analysis* 22, no. 1-2 (2003): 213 and Ralph Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other:' Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila,*" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 3 (1991): 271.
[7] Head, "Musicology on Safari," 213.

Oriental aspects imbedded in the music. Identifying the accepted defamation of the East as only "dramatic" prevents these stereotypes in music from being taken too seriously. This is seen in many exalted compositions by Mozart, Bizet, Saint-Saëns, and Ravel to name a few. Due to their fame and canonization as musical geniuses, the representations of cultural and racial stereotypes present in these works often remain overlooked.[8]

Recognizing the efforts to analyze musical representations in the last few decades, Susan McClary states:

> When cultural-studies methods first appeared in musicology fifteen years ago, they triggered a storm of polemics that sometimes overshadowed the important issues being raised. As the canon wars recede, however, scholars are finding it possible to focus on the concerns that led them to cultural criticism in the first place: the study of music and its political message.[9]

Yet, Orientalist thought in Western culture was strengthened and revived in the United States following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Fueled by fear and anger, and largely regressing from the progress of musicological investigation mentioned by McClary, the stereotypes and misrepresentations of the Middle East continue to be held as truths, preventing the discovery and uncovering of the realities and actualities of the East. As seen especially in popular culture, the East continues to be misunderstood and characterized as barbaric, violent, and stagnant.[10]

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[8] See especially Chapter 5, "Osmin's Rage" in Nasser Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient in Western Music: Violence and Sensuality* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), forthcoming.

[9] Susan McClary's comment appears on the back cover of *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* ed. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[10] Reebee Garofalo, "Pop Goes to War, 2001-2004," in *Music in the Post-9/11 World* ed. Jonathan Ritter and J. Martin Daughtry (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis, 2007), 24 and Carol Winkler,

Retracting from the rigorous critiques that followed Said's *Orientalism*, many musicologists seem to be comfortable observing and documenting Orientalism neutrally rather than engaging with it critically. Head labels this as the "safari" mentality of shallow observation and categorization:

> At its simplest (but not most innocent), musicology's re-inscription of Orientalism can involve the cursory recording of Orientalist motifs—as if the writer were on a safari in which cultural phenomena are being "noticed" and "clocked," yet without any significant interpretation being brought to bear.[11]

The troubling images of the Orient in *Belshazzar's Feast* expose how entrenched these stereotypes have become in Western thought. The continuation of these misrepresentations in the twentieth century, as well as their neglected investigation in works with sacred texts, reveals the failure of musicologists to address these issues and seek out the truths and realities of the Orient. Appropriations of the Orient must be confronted and exposed if we are to arrive at a better understanding of our neighbors and ourselves.

"Recalling U.S. Terrorism History in Contemporary Presidential Discourse," in *Terrorism: Comminucation and Rhetorical Perspectives* ed. H. Dan O'Hair et al. (Cresskill: Hampton Press, 2008), 193-213.

[11] Head, "Musicology on Safari," 221.

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